

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

April 1, 2011

Setting the tone

The first joint meeting between the Anglican Church of Canada's Council of General Synod (COGS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada's National Church Council (NCC) began on the evening of March 31 with a Eucharist celebrated by Susan Johnson, National Bishop of the ELCIC. The Rev. Dr. Richard Leggett preached. Following the Eucharist, the Anglican and Lutheran councils met jointly. Bishop Johnson and Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada each delivered brief updates on where their two churches are in the context of strategic plans and finances.

At 8:45 on the morning of April 1 Anglicans and Lutherans met in mixed Bible study groups.

Orientation from Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission

At 10:00 Anglican and Lutheran council members gathered for an orientation led by the Very Rev. Peter Wall and Bishop Michael Pryse, co-chairs of the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission. They presented a brief history of the nine commitments that exist between their churches.

These nine commitments include a commitment to welcome persons ordained in either church to the office of bishop, priest/pastor, or deacon; a commitment to establish collegial consultation on significant matters of faith and order; and to hold joint meetings of national, regional, and local decision-making bodies. (This COGS-NCC meeting is an example of living out this last commitment).

Dean Wall and Bishop Pryse encouraged council members that this full communion relationship is an example to American Anglicans and Lutherans as well as other denominations seeking to advance church unity.

In their mixed Anglican-Lutheran table groups, council members examined maps that showed the two churches' different administrative boundaries. They also picked their favourite hymns from the Anglican *Common Praise* and *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and sung them for the group.

Members then heard presentations about the denominations' strategic plans from Bishop Johnson and Archbishop Hiltz.

From 12:00 to 1:30, COGS and NCC members took a lunch break. They met separately for their afternoon sessions.

Primate's Report

Archbishop Hiltz began his report by acknowledging the recent passing of two notable Anglican leaders: Dr. William Winter, founder of the William Winter School of Ministry in Kingfisher Lake, Ont. and the Rev. Dr. Stephen Reynolds, compiler of the popular liturgical text *For All the Saints*.

"Movement" was the primary theme of the Primate's report. He set the scene by describing major world events: the political movement towards democracy in north Africa and the Middle East as well as the movements in recent natural disasters, particularly the earthquakes in Japan and New Zealand. Archbishop Hiltz noted that people of all faiths are drawn to hold these countries in their prayers.

The Primate acknowledged that at home, Canadians are on the move towards an election. He said that poverty should be a major focus in this election, as 4.3 million Canadians (including 1 in 7 children) live in poverty. Archbishop Hiltz noted that we need a national housing strategy, an

increase in the child tax credit, and a comprehensive action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Spiritual movements were also a thread in the Primate's report. He spoke about the Primates' meeting in Dublin where they considered the nature of primacy in the Anglican Communion and heard inspiring reports about the Bible in the Life of the Church project as well as the new Anglican Alliance for Relief, Development, and Advocacy.

The Primate then turned to discuss the recent London meeting of Canadian and African bishops, organized by Canadian staff—the Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully and the Rev. Dr. Isaac Kawuki Mukasa. The bishops gathered to discuss their common work in mission, and Archbishop Hiltz praised this active work of intentional listening.

Turning back to local concerns, the Primate once again pointed to Vision 2019 as an important guiding document. He described briefly how Vision 2019 guided Church House restructuring. He gave an overview of departments' work.

In his description of the Faith, Worship, and Ministry department, Archbishop Hiltz spoke about the Anglican Covenant. He recently attended the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops, where he heard opinions on the covenant from American, Korean, and Congolese bishops.

Archbishop Hiltz expressed concern about the fourth section of the covenant, which outlines relational consequences of stepping out of communion. He noted that this section does not discuss reconciliation.

"What happens when we end up with an Anglican Communion where some churches are covenanted and some aren't?" he asked.

The Primate then covered highlights of recent departmental work. He mentioned that Dr. Andrea Mann and Henriette Thompson are examining how to reconfigure partnerships in a changing world.

He also announced that Sam Carriere has been appointed as director of Resources for Mission

(formerly the Department of Philanthropy). He will continue as director of Communications and Information Resources. Bev Murphy will now serve as senior manager in the Communications department. In Resources for Mission, new positions will be opening up for a diocesan service coordinator and a stewardship educator (half-time). These positions will not be filled for some time.

Suzanne Lawson has been hired for the half-time position of national campaign liaison. Suzanne will step down as chair of the Planning and Agenda Team of COGS, and the Very Rev. Peter Elliott will take over.

The Primate concluded that he wants to spend more time at the national office. "I want to stay as close to the helm as I can be," he said, "especially as we work through this year of transition and work through Vision 2019 and make it happen."

General Secretary's report

The General Secretary, Archdeacon Michael Pollesel, shared updates on the national church office space at 80 Hayden Street Toronto. There is currently a surplus of space at 80 Hayden and leadership is in the process of "reconfiguring" this.

Archdeacon Pollesel also reminded COGS that they must participate in email votes. This led to a discussion about how to motivate members to vote by email.

Members also considered new members for working groups.

Resolution

COGS approved the membership of the Governance Working Group: David Phillip Jones, the Ven. Harry Huskins, Dr. Randall Fairey, Cynthia Haines-Turner, Monica Patten, and Bishop Sue Moxley.

The General Secretary announced results of an earlier vote on audit committee membership. Members are Dan Waterston, Michael Wellwood, and Paul Singleton.

Finally, Archdeacon Pollesel reported on the Silent Night Project and noted that \$50,000 has been raised for the Anglican Military Ordinariate.

COGS then heard brief presentations from the chancellor and the Planning and Agenda Team.

Resolution

COGS resolved the Terms of Reference for the Vision 2019 Implementation Team be adjusted to indicate that four members would be elected and the Primate would appoint two.

The rationale for the above resolution was stated as follows: "at least a third of the members of any task force should be from a diocese that does not have someone currently on COGS. Primatial appointments allow for this. This is an opportunity to ensure that gifts from across the whole church are utilized in the mission of General Synod. As well, primatial appointments can be utilized as a leadership development tool, an opportunity to grow future leaders."

Nominations

The Nominations Committee presented a slate of new members for the Vision 2019 implementation team. COGS also considered the alternate clergy delegate to the Anglican Consultative Council. Members took time to vote.

Consensus decision-making

Dr. Lela Zimmer led COGS through a brief consideration of their format of consensus decision-making. She said that COGS was improving but needed to consider how difficult it was for new members to express disagreement.

Anglican Journal Board

COGS adjourned and reconvened as a member of the Anglican Journal Board. Bishop George Elliott, chair of the board, led this discussion.

Resolutions

COGS approved the Anglican Journal's audited financial statements.

COGS also passed a resolution allowing the Anglican Journal to send applications to foundations seeking their financial support.

COGS then turned to consider a motion that would dissolve the corporation of the Anglican Journal (separately incorporated from General Synod).

Bishop Elliott explained that the board had thoroughly considered both sides. Benefits of de-incorporation would include a cost savings of up to \$100,000 and simplified governance. On the other hand, some board members argued that de-incorporation could threaten editorial independence as well as the financial stability of the Journal.

COGS members asked questions about this motion. Some wondered whether the Journal was becoming a "house organ" with this move.

Bishop Elliott said that editorial independence was still a core value of the Journal. He also emphasized that the Journal was financially solvent and that this move to de-incorporate would not threaten the grant that the Anglican Journal currently receives from Heritage Canada.

Resolution

COGS approved a motion dissolving the corporation of the Anglican Journal and establishing a governance structure to ensure accountability and oversee operations.

Bishop Elliott explained that a small group of directors would oversee this transition. COGS agreed to elect these directors tomorrow.

Elections

The Nominations Committee reported the results of two earlier votes. The Vision 2019 transition team now includes the Ven. Peter John Hobbs, Ms. Jane Osler, Major the Rev. Michelle Staples, and the Rev. Susan Titterington. The alternate clergy delegate to the Anglican Consultative Council is

the Ven. Harry Huskins.

Questions about committee reports

Members asked a variety of questions about committee reports. One member wondered if all national youth initiatives could be explained in one document from General Synod. Another member asked for an update on the national suicide prevention project that was funded by the Amazing Grace Project. National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald gave an update on the pilot project that is being developed for use in the north.

From 5:00 to 7:00, COGS and NCC members gathered for dinner.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Henriette Thompson, General Synod's coordinator for ecumenical, interfaith, and government relations, introduced a presentation on Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission on residential schools. The purpose of the presentation was to lead COGS in considering what the churches want to achieve in terms of reconciliation.

Esther Wesley, Anglican Healing Fund coordinator, shared thoughts from two of the commissioners, Marie Wilson and Justice Murray Sinclair (chair), about what reconciliation means. She urged COGS members to think about the many generations that were impacted by residential schools.

The Ven. Sidney Black, co-chair of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP), spoke about the dynamics before and after the Indian Residential School Settlement. He described his work ministering on a reserve. He has witnessed much pain, often like "the aftermath of a horrendous battle," but today he sees a freshness and optimism in some places.

National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald shared some thoughts on reconciliation from a recent meeting of ACIP. He said ACIP was surprised that the church was asking them for advice on reconciliation. He said it was as if the church, an organization devoted to God's reconciliation, had lost its confidence to speak

about its own reconciliation.

Bishop MacDonald then traced several essential steps to reconciliation: making a confession and apology; taking a fearless moral inventory; making amends; then walking together in newness of life.

In table groups, COGS members considered two questions: What would it take to help bring about reconciliation in your situation? What are some ways in which your thinking or manner of life would need to be addressed?

Members offered a range of feedback from their table groups. Bishop MacDonald said he was encouraged to hear people recognizing that reconciliation took a long time. He said this marked a maturity in the conversation.

At 9:00 COGS met for night prayer with NCC members in the chapel.