

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Friday, June 23, 2017

Council members gathered after breakfast at 8:45 a.m. at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga.

Opening Eucharist

Bishop Larry Robertson presided at the Eucharist that opened the council meeting.

Welcome and Opening Formalities

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, welcomed members to the second meeting of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) for the 2016-2019 triennium. He acknowledged two changes since the last meeting of the council: the election of Archdeacon Sidney Black as the [first Indigenous bishop for Treaty 7 territory](#), dedicated to Indigenous ministry in the Diocese of Calgary, as well as the appointment of Melanie Delva as reconciliation animator at the General Synod.

The Primate introduced numerous members of the council, as well as representatives of partners such as The Episcopal Church (TEC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF). He also listed regrets from members unable to attend.

Council members approved the minutes from the last meeting of CoGS in November 2016 before approving the agenda for the present meeting.

Primate's Report

The Primate began his report to the council with an excerpt from "A Good Pentecost" by Karen Gorham, Bishop of Sherborne in England, from the book *A Good Year* edited by Canon Mark Oakley, and noted the significance of the season of Pentecost. The Primate discussed his thoughts on church signage, suggesting that churches might

consider numbering weeks of the year on church signs in accordance with the calendar year (e.g. Week 3, Week 11) as opposed to terms such as "Ninth Sunday after Trinity" which might confuse outsiders. How do we welcome those who are not part of our community? Who are we? What is our witness?

Archbishop Hiltz turned to the theme of the triennium and the current council, "You Are My Witnesses", and said that the church had honoured this theme to varying degrees of success. Discussing the role of evangelism in the Anglican tradition, he recalled how the most recent meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council in Lusaka, Zambia had called the worldwide Anglican Communion into a period of focused discipleship. The Marks of Mission and our vows of baptism, the Primate said, reflect the fullness of the gospel and remind us that our following of Jesus impacts every area of our lives.

The Primate noted that the 8th Consultation of Anglican Bishops in Dialogue recently took place in Nairobi, Kenya, and included numerous representatives from the Anglican Church of Canada. He noted the growing numbers of participants from different countries over the years. The theme of this year's gathering was *Haraambe*, which means, "to pull together". With the testimony from the consultation set to be published after the present CoGS meeting, the Primate underscored the significance of a large group of bishops from such diverse contexts being able to release a testimony reflecting the spirit of *Haraambe*. Another recent meeting the Primate highlighted was the gathering of the House of Bishops, which coincided with a joint meeting of Anglican and Lutheran bishops.

Archbishop Hiltz drew attention to the Canada 150

symposium hosted by Bishop John Chapman in the Diocese of Ottawa, which the Primate had planned to co-host but was unable to attend due to illness. One highlight of the meeting was the address by former Senator Hugh Segal, who described the two most significant freedoms in the world as “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want”. Segal observed that the Anglican Communion has a presence on the frontlines of many global and domestic challenges, and that clergy and lay congregants could see the pathology of poverty every day. Our witness matters. Our voice matters. For the church to truly bear witness, the Primate said, would require consistent engagement on these issues.

On the National Aboriginal Day of Prayer, June 21, the Primate issued his statement “Beyond #Canada150”, which drew attention to clear direction for the federal government, citizens, and churches to honour the 94 Calls to Action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In his role as Primate, Archbishop Hiltz said he had a responsibility to continue to hold those Calls to Action before the church as a focus for the reconciling work of God and Christ, and that the Anglican Church of Canada could be proactive in responding to those calls.

The Primate shared how delighted he is by the church’s commitment to engage on a full-time basis with an animator for reconciliation, the newly appointed Melanie Delva. What stood out during Delva’s interview for the position, he noted, was her commitment to “reconciliation as a spiritual practice”. In her role as reconciliation animator—for which she would be officially commissioned at CoGS during the Sunday Eucharist—Delva will travel the country extensively working with dioceses, parishes, and schools to help respond to the Calls to Action.

Drawing the attention of members to the topic of Indigenous self-determination, Archbishop Hiltz recalled his experience attending national TRC events at which the commissioners expressed their interest in movements within the Anglican Church of Canada towards self-determination, a foundational principle of the TRC and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

Peoples. That interest dated back to the church’s 2007 appointment—at the request of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP)—of a National Indigenous Anglican Bishop. As the Primate highlighted in his National Indigenous Peoples’ Day statement, the church has also set aside certain rules and procedures in order to elect bishops in accord with Indigenous and local customs. The church had subsequently seen the election of Bishop Lydia Mamakwa in the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh. We have also seen signs growth toward a truly Indigenous expression within the Anglican Church of Canada with the election of Bishop Adam Halkett in the Diocese of Saskatchewan, Bishop Riscylla Shaw in the Diocese of Toronto, and Bishop Sidney Black in Treaty 7 territory. Archbishop Hiltz also praised “incredible work” by Bishop Barbara Andrews in the Territory of the People, particularly with elders. He noted that work by the leadership of the House of Bishops, ACIP, and the Sacred Circle was increasingly focused on the issue of self-determination.

Self-determination, he added, must not be merely an Indigenous conversation, but a conversation for the whole church, which had made a commitment to self-determination in its 1994 covenant that extended the hand of partnership.

Moving onto another key issue, Archbishop Hiltz said that council members at the present meeting would be receiving an important presentation on human trafficking. He described the scourge of human trafficking and modern slavery in stark terms: “This ugly, filthy crime stalks the earth. No country is beyond its reach,” the Primate said, noting that Canada is a source, transit and destination country for human trafficking.

In the face of this crime, and in the spirit of the Marks of Mission—particularly the fifth mark—the Primate said the churches of the Anglican Communion were joining together to combat this evil, and that other Christian denominations had launched similar efforts. Lutherans have proclaimed “Human Beings—Not for Sale” as one of the sub-themes of their commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, while Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby had

joined with Pope Francis and other faith leaders in 2014 to establish the Global Freedom Network, aiming for the eradication of modern slavery throughout the world.

The Primate urged men and women in the Anglican Church of Canada to rise up in defiance, to defeat this “crime against humanity”, and to support young people who are most vulnerable to the “living hell” of enslavement through trafficking. Evoking the words of the late Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple, Archbishop Hiltz said that the church cannot be so preoccupied with its own domestic life that it loses sight or hearing of those who look to it in great hope of Christ’s mercy and compassion, and of the release and freedom promised in the gospel.

Archbishop Hiltz concluded his report by inviting the council to join him in singing a hymn, “The Church of Christ in Every Age”.

Members broke for coffee from 10:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Consensus Decision-Making

Table groups after the break took part in a discussion regarding members’ experience of consensus decision-making, and its potential as an alternative method for the council to reach decisions.

Following the discussion, members of table groups identified various positive aspects of consensus decision-making (everyone gets to talk, people can register their level of comfort or discomfort, creating space for respectful listening), concerns (imprecise way to vote, doesn’t respect conscientious and deeply held reservations) and wishes (using consensus decision-making at General Synod in the future).

CoGS chaplain, Dean Peter Elliott facilitated the discussion, and described consensus decision-making as a “gift” from many sources including Indigenous Anglicans, one that offered an alternative to parliamentary forms of procedure and was increasingly favoured in the world of law as a means to more likely achieve a “win-win” scenario. Consensus decision-making, he added,

was also used by the World Council of Churches throughout its 2006 meeting, and Elliott noted the traditional breath of Anglicanism which has tended to accommodate a wide range of views.

The Primate expressed his hope that the present council would begin to look at what an alternative decision-making model might look like.

General Synod Planning Committee Terms of Reference

Prolocutor Cynthia Haines-Turner next took the podium to draw members’ attention to the need to appoint certain members of the General Synod Planning Committee.

In a consensus decision, council voted for the Deputy Prolocutor to henceforth become a member of the General Synod Planning Committee.

Nominating Committee Announcement

Lynne McNaughton, chair of the Nominating Committee, announced that elections would take place on Saturday morning, with nominations closing Friday night. Besides members of the General Synod Planning Committee, elections were being held for an alternative bishop to attend the 2019 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council.

Members broke for lunch from noon until 1:30 p.m.

Bible Study

The meeting resumed in the afternoon with a Bible study, centred on Luke 1:1-56. Council members read and contemplated the passage before engaging in discussion with their table groups.

Marketplace Discussion #1

Council members dispersed into separate rooms to join “marketplace” discussions on one of three topics: the Anglican Foundation of Canada, government relations as a ministry, and the Pikangikum water project. Each group engaged in a table group conversation, facilitated by individuals familiar with each topic.

Members broke for coffee from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Marketplace Session #2

Council members each had the opportunity to attend discussions in a second marketplace session after the break.

Plenary Report Back

Karen Egan facilitated a subsequent discussion in which table groups were invited to discuss two questions regarding their experience of the marketplace sessions:

- What did you hear that you found encouraging, or that you wish everyone could have heard?
- What are some of the things that you might take home to your province and your diocese?

Table groups discussed each question for 15 minutes, after which representatives from different groups then shared some of the responses.

Some members who attended the government affairs and water project sessions were impressed that people were “doing things that were having real results”. Others noted the interconnected nature of each of the three marketplace topics. In answer to the second question, one group suggested that members returning from CoGS would bring their abilities as bridge-builders to help involve their own dioceses and provinces in each area of ministry.

Responsible Investing Task Force

After an introduction by the Primate explaining the mandate of the Responsible Investment Task Force, Pension Committee trustee Robert Boeckner offered a brief update on the task force’s progress. Boeckner said the task force would not be proposing any policy changes that night, given the complexity of the issues involved, but he noted that task force members had met for the first time in January and had held regular conference calls since then. He highlighted the diversity of the task force itself, which included members from disparate locations and from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds.

To illustrate the complexity of tackling responsible investment, Boeckner pointed to some notable

contradictions in various areas the task force had examined in their research. He offered as an example Total, the French oil giant that is also the biggest investor of renewable energy in Europe. Closer to home, the Canadian oil sands are the largest source of carbon emissions in Canada and often have a negative impact on Indigenous communities—yet the industry is also the biggest employer of Indigenous people in Canada. Boeckner indicated that progress in responsible investment would require dealing with such nuanced situations.

Boeckner described three main areas of work the task force is engaged in:

- Providing a theological framework by connecting fiscal practices to scriptural traditions, considering investment through the lenses of stewardship and justice, and reflecting the fourth and fifth Marks of Mission;
- Assessing current realities, practices, and potential gaps for Anglican investment by examining the church’s portfolio, exploring responsible investing, and providing guidance for those investing the funds; and
- Building communications to share the work being done in the national church and other funds, inform diocesan groups on responsible investing principles, and assisting dioceses and other funds to build capacity.

In terms of potential next steps, the task force proposed continued exploration to determine investment of funds across the country, to be followed by a final report, guidelines and policy recommendations, and development of materials for diocesan use.

Following the presentation, council members broke into groups and discussed three questions the task force posed to them:

- In general, how do you respond to the info presented in this presentation and the associated documents?
- Do you invite us to move forward with the

information gathering process that the Task Force has recommended, including the letter and questionnaire that has been distributed for your review?

- What are your thoughts on the Task Force's recommendation to add a 'Communications' mandate to its work for the purposes of informing and adding capacity to the broader church community at national, diocesan, and in some cases individual, levels?

Representatives of different groups summarized the content of the conversations that followed. One group thought it would be helpful to send investment groups the same update that CoGS members had received with the questionnaire. Many responses themselves included additional questions, such as how to bring the conversation into the whole church and provide options for investment.

Towards 2022

Prolocutor Cynthia Haines-Turner facilitated the last agenda item of the day, revolving around ministry action for the Anglican Church of Canada following Vision 2019 that would take the church towards 2022.

The Prolocutor began by outlining two key sections from Vision 2019: priorities for the church living into God's mission, and practices for the church ready for God's mission. In providing a follow-up document leading into 2022, she said, four "dimensions" would need to feed into any plan: dioceses, provinces, the church national (General Synod, ACIP, Sacred Circle, CoGS), and the Anglican Communion.

She put forward two questions for discussion:

- Which existing directions/strategies/initiatives are helping us now and which new directions/strategies/initiatives would help us grow as people of God and as the church?
- What new things are happening in your area that we should pay attention to, that can inform our ministry beyond 2022?

After 10 minutes of discussion, representatives from each group again came to the microphone to share their responses.

They highlighted the importance of maintaining the church's commitment to walk with Indigenous partners, and building bridges with other communities and churches. The group suggested greater transparency as one area the church could improve in. Among their concerns for 2022 and beyond, they asked how church members would be one church with breadths of expression. Some expressed their hopes that one day our church would see its diversity as an its greatest asset, rather than a point of contention. Others wondered how the church could continue addressing ecological issues and political injustices within the Canadian context.

Another said that everything Haines-Turner had outlined from Vision 2019 remained valid and essential to the church's identity, and that the church should continue in the same direction. Other groups asked what true Indigenous self-determination would look like and how robust the church's public ecumenism and interfaith dialogue would be, while reiterating the importance of reaching different age groups in everything the church does.

Prayers for End of the Day

The day ended with evening prayers and a liturgy from the Iona community.

Council members adjourned for the day at 9 p.m.