

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Friday, March 11, 2016

Following an optional Eucharist service and breakfast, council members gathered at 8:45 a.m. at the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga.

Morning Prayer and Bible Study

Sister Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, Reverend Mother of the Sisterhood of St. John the Divine, led members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) in morning prayer, along with a Bible study centred around Romans 8:28-39.

Marriage Canon – Response to House of Bishops’ Statement and Commentary to Accompany Resolution

Members moved in camera to continue the previous day’s discussion about the House of Bishops’ statement. This lasted until lunch.

Council members broke for lunch from noon to 1:30 p.m.

Resources for Mission

Opening the afternoon session, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, reflected on the conversations that had taken place at council that morning and the previous day.

Comparing it to other discussions he had had in recent months, he mused on how other churches and leaders of the Anglican Communion would react if they could have a glimpse into CoGS and see “how focused we are in our work, how respectful and patient we are endeavouring to be in this work, how we’re doing our very best to be leaders in our church and to say something sensible, sensitive, and responsible to the church going into a General Synod.”

“Our work isn’t done yet,” the Primate added. “But I want to say how proud I am of this council.” He

noted his gratitude for how council members so willingly take on tasks even when not knowing at the outset how they will accomplish them.

The first report of the afternoon came from Ms. Monica Patten, interim director of Resources for Mission (RfM). Two years ago, she noted, council members were presented with a review of RfM that had been undertaken in 2013. At that time, Patten had reported on what she thought RfM could do going forward, which members supported and endorsed.

Now, as she prepared to hand over leadership of RfM to a successor, Patten offered a report on the previous two years as a means of being accountable to members.

One of the key recommendations she had made was to establish a comprehensive plan for RfM, including a fundraising plan, which it had now established—as all ministries of General Synod have established plans—with the help of its coordinating committee. It was assisted in its plan by the acquisition of new technology. Fundraising efforts had referred to a “donor management system,” which RfM received in 2014 and launched in 2015. The new technology allowed it to focus more effectively on reaching out to new donors, understanding who its donors are, setting realistic goals, and measuring progress.

The review had also urged the council to have the capacity to think about personnel and having the right people in place. Since then, RfM has made a few changes—taking on a new employee shared with the diocese of Toronto with a strong background in gift planning and major gifts; hiring another employee on a part-time basis with a partnership in the United Church of Canada to take on stewardship ministry; and putting regular

performance appraisals in place. The RfM team, Patten said, “is strong and excited about growing even stronger.”

Providing context for fundraising in general, not just within the church, statistics indicate that there are now fewer donors giving larger sums of money. Within the Anglican Church of Canada, declining membership has meant fewer contributors. While the church must do work to understand its own donor potential, Patten added that given the decline in membership, “We are holding our own very well. I think we have something to be encouraged by and quite proud of.”

Demographics are key in the fundraising world, and many of the church’s donors are 65 and older. While the church should not ignore the enthusiasm of younger donors, Patten said, our focus should be on those near the end of their working lives or about to retire, who have less debt and more to give. Research has consistently shown that those who have potential to make large gifts to the Anglican Church of Canada and its partners such as the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), the Anglican Foundation of Canada, and parishes and dioceses, and who are faithful donors to the church, are far more likely to give large gifts to hospitals, universities and cultural organizations.

Resisting frequent suggestions that fundraising might be more successful with a more business-like, competitive approach, Patten defended the identity of RfM and said that it would approach donors with a clear set of principles, values and a great story to tell. The new donor management system is increasingly allowing RfM to use data and information more thoughtfully and efficiently—understanding patterns of giving, approaching donors differently, and improving donor appreciation efforts such as thank-you letters.

The cost of fundraising is a complex subject to understand, but Patten said RfM was moving in the right direction but that it could continue to do better. The review suggested that 20 per cent of money raised is to be spent in hard costs. The Canada Revenue Agency suggests 35 per cent is an

acceptable number. General agreement in the field holds that 20 per cent is difficult to achieve except for very large organizations, but that investing in capacity is a necessity. Patten’s colleagues in RfM are grateful that General Synod understands that its costs will be higher because it is investing in capacity.

A slide of finances showed that RfM raised \$912,932 in 2015, a slight increase over the \$910,599 raised the previous year. *Giving With Grace* remains the single biggest source of revenue, followed by Gifts for Mission. Both years were higher than in 2012 and 2013, and Patten expressed confidence that investing in capacity would see those numbers continue to rise. The re-branding of *Giving With Grace*, formerly Anglican Appeal, resulted from a task group of the coordinating committee creating a new brand that reflected the pattern, type and history of giving in the church.

RfM has now put in place additional resources for gift planning, such as a newsletter for Anglicans who have left legacy gifts or are in the process of doing so. It has also increased its focus on stewardship ministry, bolstered by a partnership with the United Church of Canada and stewardship ministry associate Susan Graham Walker, who is leading the Anglican Church of Canada’s work in stewardship. For the second year in a row, a stewardship gathering is planned following last year’s successful event. The 2016 Stewardship Gathering will take place from Sept. 7-9 at the Queen of Apostles Retreat Centre.

The Primate thanked Patten for her account and praised the leadership she had provided.

New Ways of Working

General Secretary Michael Thompson took the podium and drew the attention of council members to the report *Embodying God’s Call: Aligning General Synod’s Structures for God’s Mission Today*. He began by echoing the Primate’s gratitude for how CoGS had worked and lived together over the last few years, sharing struggles and moments of both sadness and joy in the personal lives of its members.

In 2013, resulting from a call in *Vision 2019*, the Primate convened a gathering of people to consider the structures of the church and how they might more fully serve the way in which our church engages in the mission of God. The result of that consultation was *Embodying God's Call*, which has become a founding and visionary document for the life of the church in some significant ways, particularly when it comes to the work and ministry of the staff and Council of General Synod.

Among the key recommendations of the report were a call for changes in the structure and function of committees, which resulted in the formation of six new coordinating committees; a call for a review of General Synod ministries and expanded collaboration with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and other partners; and a refocusing by councils, coordinating committees and General Synod ministries towards capacity building, communication, stewardship, and local and global partnerships.

Thompson noted that the church has done some work refocusing towards capacity building—not only in RfM, but in Faith, Worship, and Ministry through the Vital and Healthy Parishes initiative, a collaborative effort with the ELCIC. Meanwhile, a new national stewardship network had helped build relationships and share skills and knowledge on that front. Other examples of collaboration and capacity building included the work of the Commission on the Marriage Canon and the Primate's Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice.

The report described a review on the possibility of relocating the office of General Synod, Anglican Foundation and PWRDF from their current Hayden Street location in Toronto. The ensuing review concluded that there would likely be no benefits to such a move, likely increasing costs and leading to the loss of staff and expertise. Recent conversations about alternative possibilities, however, have led to increased awareness of possible improvements to the existing building, such as better infrastructure and technology for remote meetings.

Cooperation with the ELCIC continues to grow. In particular, the communication ministries of the two churches work in close partnership, with staff members serving at each other's national gatherings. A change in direction of the church calendar in 2017, from photos of church buildings to a focus on the church in mission, developed out of a conversation between the Primate and ELCIC National Bishop Susan Johnson. A new church finder website for both Anglicans and Lutherans is now online and operational. Finally, a joint meeting last November of CoGS and the ELCIC National Church Council saw Anglicans and Lutherans continuing to gather together and animate each other's conversations, with the kinship between the two churches continuing to grow as a gift for both.

Recalling the experiment with a marketplace model where CoGS associates could learn about particular ministry initiatives, the report recommended that council members continue to have voluntary opportunities to associate with committees on an *ad hoc* basis. It also recommended at least two to three face-to-face meetings of coordinating committees over the course of each triennium.

On the subject of *Vision 2019*, Thompson noted that the practices and priorities of the strategic vision and its interaction with the Marks of Mission continue to energize General Synod. With significant leadership changes likely in the near future, the report recommended that the church not proceed with any major new initiative for the time being to develop a new strategic vision for General Synod, but rather extend *Vision 2019*.

Following his discussion of the report, Thompson invited council members in table groups to identify anything in the recommendations they might be cautious about and whether there was anything that was missing. A brief discussion followed lasting approximately 10-15 minutes.

Anglican Award of Merit

As a member of the Anglican Award of Merit Committee, the General Secretary then presented a resolution for five people to receive the award in 2016. The nominees for the Anglican Award of

Merit included:

- Ms. Jennifer Henry, nominated by the Anglican Church of Canada and PWRDF staff. Henry has worked in ecumenical social justice for more than two decades. She is focused particularly on education and animation, organization development, and human rights including Indigenous rights, gender and migrant justice. In addition to coordinating a cross-country economic literacy program called “Building a Moral Economy,” Henry serves on the Good Jobs Roundtable led by Unifor, the Primate’s Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice, and the Board of the Centre and Library of the Bible and Social Justice. She worships at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Toronto.
- Ms. Suzanne Lawson, nominated by the diocese of Toronto. A lay member for Canada to the Anglican Consultative Conference on three occasions, she is the chair of the Pastoral Response Advisory Group, a bishops’ advisory body focused on the blessing of same-sex unions in the diocese, and has served as a member of the diocesan and provincial synods, General Synod, the Anglican Consultative Council and chair of the Planning and Agenda Team. Lawson has also provided training and volunteer management expertise to the church. She is the author of *Discerning, Deciding, Doing—A Process for Transformation: A Call to the Diocese of Toronto for the New Millennium*.
- Mr. Trevor J.D. Powell, nominated by the diocese of Qu’Appelle. Powell has assumed a leadership role in assisting diocesan archivists across Canada in fulfilling the church’s obligations to provide access to records to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Residential Schools Settlement. He has written extensively on the history of the Anglican Church in Saskatchewan and has served as archivist and registrar for the diocese of Qu’Appelle, archivist for the ecclesiastical province of Rupert’s Land, as a member of the standing committee of General Synod

on Communications and Information Resources, as people’s warden, sub-deacon, and lay canon of St. Paul’s Cathedral in Regina, and as chair of St. Paul’s Cathedral Building in Faith Campaign.

- Mr. David Stovel, nominated by the diocese of Toronto. Stovel has served the national church and contributed significantly to the growth of pension funds as a trustee to the General Synod Pension Plan, the Lay Retirement Plan, the Continuing Education Plan, the Long Term Disability Plans, and the Employees’ Benefits program. He has served as chair of the Board of Trustees from 2000 to 2010, as a member of the Central Advisory Group of the Pension Committee, as chair of the Asset Mix Sub-Committee of the Trustees and continues as a member. He was the Pension Committee’s representative on the Unit of Public Social Responsibility and the Socially Responsible Invest Group and treasurer for St. John’s York Mills Anglican Church.
- The Hon. Mr. Justice Peter A. Whitmore, nominated by the diocese of Qu’Appelle. Whitmore has held positions as vice-chancellor and chancellor of the diocese of Qu’Appelle, and appeared before the Supreme Court of Appeal for the Anglican Church of Canada and the Supreme Court for the diocese, in the matter of the validity of the Book of Alternative Services. He acted on behalf of the diocese and General Synod in working out a fair and honourable settlement agreement that also contributed to the establishment of the TRC.

A consensus vote by council approved all five names to receive the Anglican Award of Merit.

A Slate Of Sessional Officers

Deputy Prolocutor Cynthia Haines-Turner presented a slate of sessional officers and committee members for General Synod. Taking notes of questions and comments from council members, Haines-Turner pledged to take the slate back to committee, which would do more work

based on the feedback and return it to CoGS later in the meeting.

Council members took a break for coffee from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Marriage Canon—Response and Commentary Review

Council moved in camera for discussion from 3:30 p.m. until 5 p.m.

Council members enjoyed hospitality and dinner from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Global Partnerships

Ms. Andrea Mann, director of Global Relations, gave an evening presentation on global partners of the Anglican Church of Canada who would be sending representatives to General Synod. She began by noting that Archbishop Suheil Dawani of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and his wife would be unable to attend General Synod in July due to scheduling conflicts. However, Archbishop Dawani indicated a clear interest in coming to Canada in 2017 to enjoy a longer, richer time of travel through the Canadian church.

Communion family relations are part of the historical DNA of the Anglican Church of Canada, Mann said. Canadian Anglicans have long understood themselves as members of a global church community, committing funding and resources to the wider life of the Anglican Communion. The current commitments of General Synod operate through the Office of the Primate, the General Secretary, Global Relations, PWRDF, Anglican Church Women, and many others in dioceses and parishes and institutions within the church.

“We are always and everywhere a local and global church,” Mann said. She invited council members to pause for five minutes and discuss among their table groups which other partners in the Anglican Communion they have encountered and bring to the table with them. In their responses, council members pointed to relationships and experiences with Anglicans from every corner of the globe, from Burundi to Brazil, Taiwan and the Northern Philippines to West Malaysia and South Africa,

from Pakistan to Haiti. The Anglican Indigenous Network, which includes representatives of Indigenous peoples from places such as Hawaii and New Zealand, also came up.

The bulk of Mann’s presentation concentrated on the church’s relations with two global partners that will be represented at General Synod in July: the Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil (Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil, or IEAB) and the Episcopal Church of Cuba.

Late last year, the Primate and General Synod staff members visited Brazil in hope and anticipation of the renewal of a formal partnership between the Anglican Church of Canada and the IEAB. Since 2013, the Primate of the IEAB has been Bishop Francisco de Assis da Silva, who will be speaking at General Synod this year along with Archbishop Hiltz. In 2014, Bishop da Silva visited Church House and the diocese of Ontario, meeting with PWRDF youth and Church House staff members.

The IEAB has nine dioceses and one mission district, and currently has around 120,000 members. It is the oldest non-Roman Catholic church in Brazil and the youngest province of the Anglican Communion, with a strong leadership of lay and ordained women. Offering context for the Brazilian church, Mann noted that Brazil has one of the highest rates of income inequality in the world. Pressing issues in the country include access to land and affordable housing, high levels of domestic violence, racism, homophobia, discrimination and exploitation aimed at the high number of migrants working in the informal economy. The IEAB takes a more inclusive approach to preaching the Gospel to Brazilian society, initiating conversations to address epidemic problem of violence against women, advocating for the rights of LGBTI persons, standing with Indigenous peoples, and for the landless rural workers movement.

Prior to 2010, the IEAB was in the top two of six national partnerships in the Latin America and Caribbean region for the Anglican Church of Canada. The close relationship between the two churches was marked by regular meetings and visits, grants in support of core provincial

infrastructure and national ministry programs, scholarships for advanced theological education, Canadian mentoring immersions for provincial staff, volunteers in mission, student internships, and companion diocese relationships.

A decision made in 2010 by the Canadian church to partner strategically with one province in each of the six main regions of the Anglican Communion as a means of reducing General Synod expenditures led to the Episcopal Church of Cuba becoming the strategic partner in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Post-2010, the Anglican diocese of Ontario retains friendly connections with the diocese of South Western Brazil and the Provincial Office, while the diocese of Huron and the diocese of Amazonia enjoy a new covenanted relationship.

With General Synod on its way to renewing formal, partner relations with the IEAB, Mann asked council members whether they had any ideas for what possible connections for ministry and growth might be made between the two churches. Among the suggestions from table groups were intersection on social justice issues such as the environment and income inequality, promoting non-violent conflict resolution skills for young people, and addressing violence against women.

The second part of Mann's presentation concerned the Episcopal Church of Cuba (Iglesia Episcopal de Cuba, or IEC). The Primate of the IEC since 2010 has been Bishop Griselda Delgado del Carpio, who will be attending General Synod in July along with Dr. Jose "Pepe" Bringas, director of the Office of Mission Development Program. The Cuban church has been an autonomous diocese since 1963 under the supervision of the Metropolitan Council of Cuba (MCC). Representatives of the Episcopal Church of the United States and the Anglican Church of Canada both sit on the MCC, with the Canadian Primate serving as chair. The IEC has 40 parishes and mission stations in four archdeaconries. It consists of more than 3,500 members and 22 clergy.

Cuba is a country in significant transition. Current issues facing Cubans include increased private ownership and a concurrent decline in social

welfare and programs oriented towards the common good, along with normalization of relations with the USA, food security, unemployment, and inflation.

In 2013, the IEC embarked upon a three-year strategic mission development program in partnership with PWRDF and the U.S.-based Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) agency to build the church's capacity for leadership on the missionary, pastoral, technical, and organization fronts. Nearly all parishes in the Cuban church have developed new ministries through community-based partnerships in response to local needs, such as market gardens, women's sewing classes, piggeries, preschools, children's breakfast programs, barrio eldercare, food processing, vacation Bible camps, and farms. Many parishes have undergone renovations and property enhancement after decades of deferred maintenance.

General Synod's partnership with the IEC manifests itself through numerous initiatives of the Canadian church, including its role in the MCC, youth leadership programs, theological education, temple restoration, the Campimento Blankenship (a 25-acre property owned by the diocese which is being slowly being converted into arable land for local food production and consumption), and providing clergy stipend support. For more than 15 years, the diocese of Niagara has been in a covenant companion diocese relationship with the IEC. The Cuban church is also a partner in the PWRDF Office of Mission Development, and the Anglican Foundation of Canada is a funding partner, along with General Synod, PWRDF, Niagara and the IEC, for the international Justice Camp taking place from April 30 to May 7.

The future holds major changes for the IEC following its 2015 request to return to the Episcopal Church of the United States, which prefigures a new strategic mission development plan from 2017 to 2020, new IEC governance structure, new friends and neighbours in the USA, and new social, economic, and political contexts. Mann posed a number of questions to the council:

- How is the Anglican Church of Canada to

be involved in this transition?

- How shall the two churches celebrate our 50 years of walking together?
- What message should the General Synod offer in July to Bishop Griselda and the IEC?

She invited either the Primate or General Secretary to say more about the transition taking place in Cuba and the Cuban church. Archbishop Hiltz responded, noting that the conversation on the desire to move from being an extra-provincial diocese to belonging to a province of the Anglican Communion again had been going on for several years, with different ideas floated from the possible creation of a new province in the Caribbean to returning to the church in either the West Indies or the United States.

The Primate acknowledged that for many people in the Cuban church, one of the key issues is clergy pensions, which Cuban clergy have not enjoyed since 1963. The difficult situation for aging clergy members who face the prospect of retiring without a pension has motivated, for many, the desire to return to the Episcopal Church.

However, Archbishop Hiltz said, while there was much anticipation to return to the Episcopal Church, there was also a fair degree of anxiety about the future of the Cuban church's relationship with the Anglican Church of Canada. That anxiety stems from the sense of deep, abiding commitment by the Canadian church to its Cuban counterpart, from financial support to the sharing of resources and the role of the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada as chair of the MCC. Work made possible through the partnership with PWRDF, such as community development programming and farming projects, is another major component of the Cuban-Canadian church partnership. Many in the Cuban church are worried about what will happen to the substantial funding from the Canadian church once the IEC returns to the church in the United States.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Mann urged council members to introduce themselves to Bishop Griselda and Dr. Bringas at General Synod and to share information about themselves and their local ministries, continuing to cement the

partnership between Canadian Anglicans and the IEC.

Ms. Jane Osler, co-chair of the Planning and Agenda Team, then outlined parts of the agenda for the following day.

Holden Evening Prayer

Following the day's agenda items, a Holden Evening Prayer with hymns took place in the chapel of the Queen of Apostles Retreat Centre.

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