

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Sunday, March 17, 2019

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

Orders of the Day

Dr. Karen Egan and the Very Rev. Peter Wall, co-chairs of the Planning and Agenda Team, read out the Orders of the Day.

Sessional Committees

Ms. Cynthia Haines-Turner, prolocutor, presented the proposed list of members for sessional committees of General Synod. The list read as follows:

- Agenda Committee: Peter Wall (chair), Ian Alexander, Derrick Bishop, Terry Caines, Mel Malton, Alison Falby, Dennis Newhook
- Certification of Minutes Committee: General Secretary, Prolocutor, Alan Perry (crossover member), Honorary Clerical and Lay secretaries
- Credentials Committee: General Secretary, Deputy Prolocutor, Clare Burns
- Nominating Committee: Canada: Bruce Myers, Karen Egan (Chair), Larry Renouf; Ontario: Anne Germond, Bill Mous, Haroldine Neil Burchert; Rupert's Land: Bill Cliff, Murray Still, Sheila Vanderputten; BC & Yukon: Lynne McNaughton, Sarah Usher, Catherine Pate

A motion to appoint the proposed members was adopted by consensus.

Results of Email Ballot: General Synod Archivist

Haines-Turner also reported the results of the e-ballot on the Primate's nomination of Ms. Laurel Parson as the Archivist of General Synod. Under Canon V, the Council of General Synod (CoGS) must appoint the Archivist. An email ballot was distributed on Feb. 14, 2019 and voting closed on Feb. 22 at 12 p.m.

The results of the ballot were 18 votes in support of the Primate's nomination of Parson for the position of Archivist, General Synod.

All Parties Lessons Learned

Ms. Melanie Delva, national reconciliation animator, presented the report *One Step on a Journey: The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the Anglican Church of Canada—Lessons Learned*, an exercise to reflect on the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was only one of many different aspects of that agreement, which also included the Common Experience Payment and the Independent Assessment Process. Delva noted that the world was watching the results of the Canadian agreement, which was different from many other agreements around the world related to truth and reconciliation. In South Africa, for example, the agreement included a provision giving amnesty to perpetrators who came forward.

The summary report on *All Parties Lessons*

Learned that was being presented to CoGS was also submitted to the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP), the Vision Keepers Council, the Primate's Commission on Discovery, Reconciliation and Justice, and the Anglican Church of Canada leadership team, and would also be submitted to the next meeting of the House of Bishops.

Of the contents of the report, Delva noted, "This process was hard ... Some of the things I learned were hard." These lessons, she added, would influence the way she performed her work as reconciliation animator going forward, and she implored council members to read the report. She pointed to the need for the church to do both internal work, in terms of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Anglicans, but also external work, in the form of reconciliation with Indigenous communities who are not connected to the church. She urged members to talk to their bishops about—or if they were bishops, to consider—how their dioceses might carry out the actions laid out in the section of the report "Doing Things Differently."

A motion to adopt the report was amended to clarify that CoGS was commending to General Synod, before being adopted by consensus.

Resolution

Be it resolved that:

This Council of General Synod acknowledge receipt of the report *One Step on a Journey: The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the Anglican Church of Canada—Lessons Learned* and its Executive Summary, commend it to General Synod, and encourage the Anglican Church of Canada at all levels to read them and take action on their recommendations

for ongoing reconciliation work both within the Anglican Church and more broadly.

Faith, Worship, and Ministry (cont'd)

Two further motions from Faith, Worship, and Ministry were brought forward, concerning respectively [*The Arusha Call to Discipleship*](#) and the anniversary of the Canadian Council of Churches.

National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald spoke to offer background on *The Arusha Call to Discipleship*, having attended the World Council of Churches' Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in March 2018 in Arusha, Tanzania, where the statement was drafted. The context of the document, he said, that "we now live in a post-Christendom world". In light of this fact, he added, "Thanks be to God."

The collapse of Christendom has meant bad things for churches at the institutional level, Bishop MacDonald said, but it also creates exciting opportunities. The Arusha conference was designed in large part to address this new era of post-Christendom, an age in which the colonial church is collapsing and a new worldwide reality is developing, one in which local forms of Christian faith are multiplying all over the world that have no connection to Western churches and their histories and issues.

Chinese Christians, for example, might look at someone with a puzzled look if that person were to identify themselves as "Anglican" or "Catholic" or "Protestant". Such historic realities that are so much a part of world in which Canadian Anglicans live and move have little bearing to many new converts who think of themselves simply as Christians.

What is emerging in this new reality, the bishop said, is a renewed focus on discipleship, both

individually and communally, as being the essence of what Christians are to be in the world today. In another sign of the move away from the colonial church, Bishop MacDonald highlighted the strong Indigenous presence at Arusha gathering, which included The Most Rev. Jackson Ole Sapit, Primate of Kenya. Archbishop Sapit's background is Maasai, an Indigenous people from Kenya.

In Bishop MacDonald's view, it is clear that our discipleship is not just about returning the health of churches, but that it is also essential for confronting the great moral crisis today: the ways in which money has captured our hearts and every aspect of our lives, including the very climate of the planet we live on. That culture of money is destroying and sapping all of the strength and deforming our discipleship as followers of Jesus, and requires a strong spiritual response.

Both motions by Faith, Worship, and Ministry were adopted by consensus.

Resolution

Be it resolved that this Council of General forward to the General Synod 2019 the following motion:

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

1. affirm the *Arusha Call to Discipleship* which emerged from the World Council of Churches' Conference on World Mission and Evangelism sponsored by the WCC Commission on Witness and Evangelism (March 2018);
2. encourage programmatic bodies within the General Synod to integrate the *Arusha Call to Discipleship* into the guiding principles of baptismal living for the shaping of national ministries; and

3. commend the *Arusha Call to Discipleship* to dioceses for study and inclusion in their considerations of evangelism, witness and discipleship.

Resolution

Be it resolved that this Council of General Synod forward the following motion to the General Synod 2019:

Be it resolved that, in this special time marking the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the formation of the Canadian Council of Churches, this General Synod, in a spirit of gratitude, offer congratulations to the President and Executive of the Canadian Council of Churches, and recommit the Anglican Church of Canada in our membership and full participation in the life and witness of the Council.

Partner Moments

Ms. Pat Lovell, partner to CoGS from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), offered the first of two partner moments, sharing details of what was discussed at the ELCIC's most recent National Church Council.

Plans are well underway for the ELCIC's upcoming National Convention in July at the University of Regina. The theme of the gathering is "Call to Journey Together: The Ministry of Reconciliation," and a number of motions similar to those passed by CoGS will be included.

The ELCIC practices four priorities at the moment: courageous innovation, reconciled relationships, empowered disciples, and one body working together. Resolutions at the National Convention will embody each of these priorities in different ways. For example, a

resolution on single-use plastics will aim to reduce use of plastics and promote sources aimed at local efforts to do so, something the Anglican Church of Canada has also been working on. Lovell also highlighted a resolution to respect LGBTQ2S+ persons, and another to recommend adoption of the *Memorandum of Mutual Recognition of Full Communion* to bring the ELCIC closer to The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in addition to the Anglican Church of Canada. The document *A Common Word* is also being presented with the intention of the ELCIC becoming a signatory and promoting closer relations between Christians and Muslims.

Lovell paid tribute to Archbishop and Primate Fred Hiltz as well as Prolocutor Cynthia Haines-Turner, who has been present at the ELCIC National Church Council for years as the Anglican Church of Canada representative. She praised the relationship between ELCIC National Bishop Susan C. Johnson and Archbishop Hiltz as an example of what it means to be real partners, noting the two liked to consult on a regular basis.

The entire process of the Anglican Church of Canada pondering proposed changes to the marriage canon met with admiration from Lovell. She praised the church's approach that began with listening conversations right after the 2013 General Synod, and was followed by an in-depth study in the form of the report *This Holy Estate* and further conversations throughout dioceses. "No matter where it ends, you have done great due diligence," she said. "I admire and applaud you for that, because it's not an easy task. The greatest test will come at the convention, and I know that God will be with you." Lutherans, she added, would also be present at General Synod, and their prayers would always be with their Anglican partners.

Canon Noreen Duncan, recently re-elected as

representative of The Episcopal Church (TEC) to CoGS, provided the second partner moment. She highlighted the pride of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry in the connection between TEC and the Anglican Church of Canada. Since the presiding bishop took on his current position, the work of TEC has focused around three pillars: caring for creation, evangelism, and racial reconciliation.

In her time at CoGS, Duncan said, she had learned much about reconciliation from the Anglican Church of Canada. She highlighted the ways in which the church had walked together with Indigenous sisters and brothers and with ACIP, and the way that it saw racial reconciliation as structural to the church—not an issue in the past, not limited to residential schools that are now gone, but rather in terms of the "continuing sin of racism." Anti-racism would be central to Duncan's mission over the next three years serving as liaison to the Bishop's Joint Standing Committee on Racial Reconciliation.

While the Anglican Church of Canada moves towards the second reading at General Synod of its amendment on proposed changes to the marriage, Duncan said that in the case of TEC, "We have been through our same-gender issues." Since 2015, TEC has formally allowed same-sex marriage. Looking "as siblings" at the process of their Canadian counterparts, Duncan too affirmed, "You have done your due diligence." She wanted Canadian Anglicans to know that Episcopalians would be with them in July in Vancouver. She thanked CoGS for having her present and for welcoming her to Vancouver, and expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to be welcome during this important part of the church's life in Canada and for sisters and brothers in Indigenous communities.

Anglican Award of Merit Committee

General Secretary Michael Thompson presented a resolution from the Anglican Award of Merit Committee, which included the names of six people to receive the award in 2019: Mr. Robert (Bob) Boeckner, Ms. Debra Gill, Ms. Melissa Green, Mrs. Anne Patterson, Mrs. Dorothy Russell-Patterson, and Mrs. Susan Winn. Council voted to adopt the resolution.

Resolution

Be it resolved:

That this Council approves all six recommended names to receive the Anglican Award of Merit in 2019.

Members took a break from 10:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Prolocutor Reflections

As she prepares to step down from her role as prolocutor, Haines-Turner offered some reflections from her tenure at CoGS. Among her observations, she noted the decrease in size of the council and expressed her belief that a smaller council worked better in carrying out its work. At the same time, she noted a large number of absences at the current council, which has an effect on the remaining members who have to dig in and do the work.

Though the current meeting was the last meeting of the present council, the prolocutor reminded members that their term continues until a new council is elected at General Synod, and that there are still a number of ways they can contribute to the leadership and ministry of the church. Only 11 people present, she noted, would be in a position to be elected to the next council. As a result, she urged members upon their return home to talk about the work of CoGS and the importance of people allowing their names to stand in nomination for it. In light of the commitment required to serve as a

member of CoGS, she noted that nominees with that skill would be particularly helpful.

Highlighting the good work and ministry of the committees and CoGS as a whole, Haines-Turner thanked the council for the privilege of serving as prolocutor, which she called "the funnest job ever."

Heartbeat of the Church Feedback

Karen Egan presented some of the results of the [Heartbeat of the Church](#) exercise that council members took part in earlier in the meeting, when they responded to three questions and then offering heartfelt prayers.

In response to the question "Describe a time when our church made your heart glad," council members pointed to moments such as Archbishop Michael Peers' apology, the establishment of the Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh, the Consultation of Anglican Bishops in Dialogue, the declaration of full communion with the ELCIC in 2001, resolutions towards Indigenous self-determination, and the feeling of worship when people sing and pray together.

In response to the question "Describe a time when our church made your heart ache," members cited attending regional and national TRC events and hearing the testimony of those who had been damaged by the church; the voting error at the 2016 General Synod in regard to the amendment on proposed changes to the marriage canon; hearing a negative reaction from one bishop to the 1993 apology; moments when Anglicans do not trust each other; and church failures to identify its own role in creating division and pain, even in the light of good intentions.

In response to the question, "Describe a time when our church gave you hope," members highlighted Indigenous ministries; the ministry

of Archbishop Fred Hiltz; seeing new generations of theological students and bishops; anticipation of participating in the Anglican Consultative Council; the way the church responds to incidents such as the recent shooting in Aotearoa-New Zealand; and accepting the risks of walking towards reconciliation with Indigenous Anglicans, not knowing exactly where that road may lead, but knowing that God is leading us.

Heartfelt prayers from the members conveyed feelings of gratitude and thanksgiving, as well as petitions to God for strength heading into the future.

Financial Update and Risk Management (cont'd)

Ms. Hanna Goschy, treasurer and CFO, responded to questions about the financial update and put forward a resolution on the process by which dioceses make and fulfill financial commitments to the ministries of the General Synod. During a subsequent discussion, council members asked Goschy questions about the resolution, specifically involving the issue of penalties in connection to dioceses that do not fulfill financial commitments.

General Secretary's Report

In response to these questions, the Ven. Michael Thompson, General Secretary of the General Synod, expanded the discussion of the church's national planning process from one focused on General Synod to engaging the church national in a conversation about the contribution that each of us can make to the ministry of the church. Though the word "penalty" had come up, Thompson suggested that what members were really talking about was partnership, and a planning process that engages members of the church as partners in outcomes that can change and renew people's lives.

A resolution on the church's strategic planning process was put forward, but debate over its precise wording compelled members of the Resolutions Committee to work together over lunch to present a reworded version. A different resolution on the 2022 Joint Assembly was put forward and adopted by consensus.

Resolution

Be it resolved that this Council of General Synod direct the General Secretary to accept the offer of the Diocese of Calgary to be host diocese for the meeting of the General Synod in 2022.

Members broke for lunch from noon until 12:45 p.m.

Further Motions

After lunch, three more resolutions were put forward, including the revised motion on the strategic planning process. All three were adopted by consensus.

Resolution

Be it resolved that:

The General Synod direct the Council of General Synod to develop and initiate a process to re-examine the mission of General Synod in relation to the dioceses, provinces, including the self-determining Indigenous Church, with a goal to allow the structures of General Synod to best enable and serve God's mission.

Resolution

That the Council of General Synod commend to General Synod 2019 that the Synod direct the Council of General

Synod in partnership with the entire church to prayerfully undertake a strategic planning process that will lead to the presentation of a proposal to the 2022 meeting of the General Synod for our ministry and mission with the General Synod.

Resolution

Be it resolved:

That this Council of General Synod strongly recommend to the incoming Council of General Synod that it examine the process by which dioceses are invited to make and fulfill financial commitments to the ministries of General Synod.

Closing Eucharist

Council members received certificates prior to the Eucharist that would close out the final meeting of CoGS for the 2016-2019 triennium. Archbishop Hiltz served as preacher during the service.

In his sermon, the Primate reiterated calls for a church that is Christ-centered and gospel-centred, to be a servant church, to live a "cross-shaped life" and to bear witness in the world. He believed that in its present meeting, the council had offered "a word to the church" not just about marriage, but about self-determination, about safe church, and about many other resolutions commended to General Synod. Council members celebrated the Holy Eucharist and then departed for home.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.