

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Sunday, November 12, 2017

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

Orders of the Day

The Very Rev. Peter Wall read out the Orders of the Day.

Marriage Canon Conversation

The Ven. Dr. Lynne McNaughton, chair of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) working group on the marriage canon, introduced a discussion on the marriage canon. In this segment, two pairs of CoGS members sat across from each other and engaged in "modelling conversations", speaking about their respective backgrounds, views on the proposed changes to the marriage canon, and experience of the vote at General Synod 2016.

After these conversations, McNaughton invited all CoGS members to split into groups according to ecclesiastical province and discuss the process of the conversations they had just heard. In successive discussion periods, they responded to the questions: What worked about this listening process? How would you improve the process? And how might you use the listening process as a resource in your own setting?

Archbishop and Primate Fred Hiltz thanked McNaughton and the working group for putting together the discussion. The Rev. Canon David Burrows then put forward a motion related to the marriage canon, which was adopted by consensus.

Resolution

Be it resolved that regarding the Second Reading of Resolution A051-R2 (Amendment to Canon XXI) on Marriage in the Church, this Council of General Synod:

1. Request the Primate and Prolocutor to communicate with the Metropolitans

and Provincial Prolocutors, and diocesan bishops and synods, and to encourage full consideration is given prior to General Synod 2019.

2. Request that the consideration given shall be reported to the Council of General Synod no later than Nov. 1, 2018.

Partner Moment

The first of two "partner moments" related to the Anglican Church of Canada's full communion partner, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC). Prolocutor Cynthia Haines-Turner, Anglican representative to the National Church Council (NCC) of the ELCIC, briefly recounted the last NCC meeting in the beginning of September, which was almost entirely dedicated to developing a strategic plan for the ELCIC.

Mrs. Pat Lovell, partner to CoGS from the ELCIC, went into further detail on the NCC meeting. The NCC worked on areas such as courageous innovation, healthy church, empowering disciples, and clear theological identity, which ELCIC staff would bring back to their March meeting to continue to refine. The NCC has reduced the size of its council to 12 members, in addition to its executive. The smaller, more intimate group in part reflects declining church attendance.

Lovell touched on highlights from the Lutherans' commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. The theme of the commemoration, "Liberated by God's Grace", and one of its subthemes "Human Beings—Not for Sale", particularly struck Lovell due to its similarity to the Anglican focus on human trafficking. During the previous day's discussion at CoGS, Lovell was encouraged to hear so much about the need to end human trafficking. She believed that as full

communion partners, Anglicans and Lutherans had a chance to make an impact together politically and socially.

As always, Lovell said, she remains impressed by the work of Anglicans related to reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination. She found herself inspired by *The Road to Warm Springs* and the personal reflections of those who attended. The morning conversations on the marriage canon also reminded her of the sensitive nature of the topic and how important it was for people to be heard, to hear one another, and to walk with one another rather than merely paying lip service to their concerns.

Finally, Lovell praised the presentation by the Rev. Mark Whittall on his experience of a church plant at St. Albans Ottawa. “I thought that was super, because he took a church from nothing and made it into something where all people can participate in the downtown core of Ottawa,” she said. As Lovell prepared to return to her local church in Newmarket, Ont. to take part in a visioning exercises, she invoked the words of Saint Leo the Great: “If you believe it, then act on it.” Lovell ended her presentation by saying she continues to be inspired by the work of the Anglican Church of Canada.

You Are My Witnesses: Moment 8

Two CoGS members, McNaughton and Haines-Turner, offered the final personal reflections of the meeting on *The Road to Warm Springs*.

McNaughton echoed what others had said about what a privilege and honour it was to be present, and commended Anglican Video for documenting the event. Speaking personally, she saw *The Road to Warm Springs* as a deepening of the inner work she has done as a settler around decolonization, losing the idea of being an honest bystander and accepting the dark side of Canada and the residential schools. She recalled a phrase she wrote in her office: “We will have made significant progress when all Canadians speak of Indigenous ways as just as good as European.”

What McNaughton found particularly hopeful was the will to change. At the moment, the Anglican

Church of Canada does not know precisely what self-governance and self-determination will look like, but is still moving forward on that journey. She compared this feeling to the moment in Exodus when people are standing on the edge of the Red Sea and experiencing fear, and God says to Moses, “Tell the people to go forward.”

Haines-Turner noted how *The Road to Warm Springs* was inspired by the gospel story of *The Road to Emmaus*, in which disciples on a journey together encounter the risen Christ. It was not long into the national gathering that she began thinking it really felt like a consultation and partnership, in which people were walking together. The Prolocutor acknowledged the graciousness of Indigenous people to even enter into such a conversation and walk together, something that was particularly important for her given the history that was discussed at the event.

Since the gathering, Haines-Turner said, she has been haunted by the image of burning drums and chopping up totem poles, based on accounts of Christian missionaries forcing Indigenous people to physically destroy the symbols of their own culture and beliefs. “It’s such a concrete image of a lack of respect,” the Prolocutor said. Accordingly, having the sense of being able to walk in partnership was something she felt throughout. While it does not change the awful image, she said, it does help her deal with it.

Members took a coffee break from 10:40 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Closing Eucharist

Council members attended a closing Eucharist in the chapel.

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

Partner Moment

Canon Noreen Duncan, representative of the Episcopal Church to CoGS, offered the second “partner moment” of the day. She discussed anti-racism work in her home diocese, the Diocese of New Jersey, which had recently passed a sanctuary resolution—the first of any in the Episcopal Church—allowing it to become a Sanctuary

Diocese. That status declares the Diocese of New Jersey to be a place of welcome, refuge, and healing for people targeted for deportation due to their immigration status. Anti-racism training is provided throughout the diocese. The diocese has also participated in work against poverty, viewing the struggles of the poor as connected to the injustice and sin of racism.

Canon David Burrows discussed a visit to Episcopalians in the state of Maryland, where he recounted some of the common heritage and community of faith that bound Maryland and his home province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Burrows described his personal interactions with Episcopal Church members in other areas of the country and their efforts to cope with tribulations such as recent severe hurricanes.

At the end of his presentation, Canon Burrows performed a version of the “Chicken Dance” to accompanying music, having agreed to do so if council members donated money to the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund throughout the meeting. Other CoGS members joined in and danced themselves. Bishop Bruce Myers took the podium to display an envelope that contained \$300 raised thus far, and said that donations would continue to be accepted until the end of the meeting. He credited Burrows and fellow CoGS member Mrs. Katie Puxley for coming up with the idea.

2018 Budget Resolution

Bishop Fraser Lawton and Prolocutor Cynthia Haines-Turner put forward a motion on the previous day’s budget, which was adopted by consensus.

Resolution

Be it resolved that the Council of General Synod approves the 2018 budget with a surplus of \$29,853.

The Road to Warm Springs 2

Bishop After the passing of the resolution, former Indigenous Ministries Coordinator Donna Bomberry facilitated another discussion on *The Road to Warm Springs*. The goal was to give CoGS

an opportunity to discuss what members had heard in the last day and a half about people’s experiences on *The Road to Warm Springs*, as well as the presentation by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) about the spiritual movement towards an Indigenous self-determining church and the goals that were set out.

Bomberry posed three questions to the table groups:

- What did you hear in the *Road to Warm Springs* and the ACIP presentations that you found encouraging?
- What would you like to know more about?
- If your dream for self-determination could come true, what would that look like?

Representatives of each table group moved to the microphone after the discussion to summarize the responses of their tables. There was a sense that the whole church was on board and supportive of the goal of moving towards self-determination. Members were heartened by the the leadership of Indigenous Anglicans in developing that plan and the real sense of ownership and pride that was coming out of the reflections on *The Road to Warm Springs*, and appreciated the fact that the plan looked almost exclusively towards the future.

Many council members wished to learn more details about the specific structures and governance for the self-determining Indigenous church. There was a hope that the Indigenous church would be both self-determining but also fully welcoming to others. One member painted *The Road to Warm Springs* as a microcosm of that model, as a largely Indigenous gathering where non-Indigenous Anglicans were nevertheless welcomed and made to feel integrated.

Finally, one table group suggested the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop should be an Archbishop in connection with the Indigenous church, and that the Anglican Church of Canada should consider a change to its official crest that would reflect the Indigenous aspect of the church.

Bomberry thanked members for their feedback

and collected the papers with their responses.

General Secretary/Budget Scenarios/Planning

General Secretary Michael Thompson's presentation focused on what he called a conversation that CoGS would need to have for the next while. CoGS, he said, needed to be aware of how the church had achieved balanced budgets in recent years, and to be aware of potential budgetary scenarios in the coming years so as not to be taken aback or surprised.

Since 2010, General Synod has seen more or less stable diocesan income, achieving balanced financial results through long vacancies for various management positions, positions that had been brought to an end for programmatic reasons, and economies within General Synod ministries. New realities, however, meant increasing costs in the years ahead. Some expenses include human trafficking initiatives funded from the Ministry Investment Fund, the full funding of the Reconciliation Animator for five years from existing revenues, new suicide prevention work funded from deferred income, "Corn Soup" documents and the call after *The Road to Warm Springs* for growing financial commitment to a National Indigenous Spiritual Ministry.

Thompson recounted the priorities and practices outlined in Vision 2019, as well as recommendations from the January 2014 consultation *Embodying God's Call*. In terms of revenue, these included developing and strengthening covenants with dioceses, with a review of possible new approaches to apportionment formula (since 2014, the church has reviewed the formula and decided to continue on its current basis for the time being), and developing new financial streams for specific ministries and partnerships, including Indigenous Ministries/ACIP, Council of the North, global partnerships, and the *Anglican Journal*.

The General Secretary invited table groups to discuss two questions:

- As we consider funding new ministry initiatives and potential revenue declines, what principles and values should be

under consideration?

- As the Management Team, Financial Management Committee, and CoGS consider the financial future, with whom should they consult?

Table groups wrote down responses after the discussion and the papers were collected for study.

Key Messages/Word to the Church

Planning and Agenda Team co-chair Peter Wall invited council members to suggest 10 words or phrases that described what CoGS did over the course of its meeting.

Key messages members identified were as follows:

- Thoughtful
- Enlightening
- We continued down *The Road to Warm Springs*
- Learning to listen
- We heard both sides of the marriage canon debate
- Courageous conversations
- Holy worship
- Holy manners
- Heard a lot of thankfulness
- Remembered the victims of war and prayed for peace
- Careful stewardship of resources
- Heard and learned a lot about mission

Closing out the meeting, Archbishop Hiltz asked for the lights to be dimmed and stood behind the altar. Council members had begun the meeting on Friday remembering Leo the Great and his teaching. The New Testament reading of that day's Eucharist and Bible study was Philippians 2:1-13. In his sermon and report, the Primate had invited members to ponder what St. Paul might say to this young church. The reading from Philippians, he said, clearly informed the conversations and reflections around *The Road to Warm Springs* and how the church can continue that journey, while the text also appeared onscreen as members entered into reflection on modelling conversations with respect to the marriage canon.

The Primate drew the meeting to an end by re-

reading this text so that members could take it with them as holy counsel—not only for themselves and their work in this meeting, but for the life and work of the church in those places from which members came, and to which they now returned.

After the reading of the text, council members held a moment of silence and said a closing prayer before departing.

Members adjourned the meeting at 3 p.m.