

# COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Saturday, November 14, 2015

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

## **Morning Prayer and Bible Study**

Members of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) of the Anglican Church of Canada (ACoC) and the National Church Council (NCC) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) joined together in morning prayer and Bible study led by Sister Elizabeth Rolfe-Thomas, chaplain to CoGS and Reverend Mother of the Society of St. John the Divine. The Bible study focused on a passage in Matthew 16:1-12.

## **Truth and Reconciliation Commission—Moving Forward**

Henriette Thompson, director of Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice, and the Rev. Paul Gehrs, assistant to the National Bishop, justice and leadership, facilitated a discussion on how Anglicans and Lutherans could move forward on the 94 Calls to Action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Gehrs noted that some of the recommendations would take a long time to implement, while others would be accomplished by Canada in the short and medium term. Some were specifically directed at churches.

Topmost among the latter category was Call to Action No. 48, which calls churches to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as a framework for reconciliation. As part of their commitment, religious denominations and faith groups are to issue a statement on how they will implement the UNDRIP within no later than March 31, 2016.

After watching a video of Indigenous people from around the world speaking about the principles laid out in the UN Declaration, CoGS and NCC members engaged in table group discussions to answer two questions: what needed to happen for Anglicans and Lutherans to more deeply understand and to fully comply with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and what needs to be considered as we move forward.

In their responses, members suggested incorporating the UN Declaration into worship, such as reading a different point from the document for each day of Lent or once per week during the Prayers of the People. They spoke of the need to engage with their Indigenous neighbours and recognize the role of Indigenous peoples in history, to build a relationship of trust based on non-Indigenous people relinquishing control and allowing Indigenous people to take the lead, to engage in self-reflection by confront their own privileges as non-Indigenous people, and to promote further education.

Gehrs thanked members for their contributions and closed with a prayer. Archbishop Hiltz noted that the NCC had received a significant report from Gehrs on implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and asked whether Anglicans might be able to obtain copies, citing the good practical discussion contained in his report.

With the larger concentration of Indigenous people within the ACoC, the Primate said any internal conversation about the Calls to Action should be done in consultation with the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP). Given the looming March 31 deadline, he indicated that that

the ACoC may only be able to produce a progress report at that point given the existing timeline for ACIP meetings.

*Council members broke for coffee.*

## **Budget 2016**

Following the coffee break, CoGS and NCC members split into different rooms again, as Hanna Goschy, treasurer and CFO, gave a presentation on the 2016 budget of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Detailing the budget report, Goschy noted that a \$367,000 surplus had originally been planned in the previous year's forecast for 2016. The final budget included approximately \$11.9 million for both revenue and expenses, with the exact difference working out to a final operating surplus of \$40,800 for 2016 after transfers. The 2016 budget is based on developed work plans from the ministries of General Synod, with the Financial Management Committee having reviewed the proposed budget on Oct. 24, 2015.

Diocesan contributions make up 86 per cent of net sources of revenue, with the remaining 14 per cent evenly divided between Resources for Mission and other revenue sources. Goschy presented a line graph that showed a relative stabilization in proportional giving after 2008 following a protracted decline starting in the early 1990s. Proportional gifts from dioceses total approximately \$8.4 million. Revenue from Resources for Mission total \$657,000, and the \$1.4 million in remaining revenue comes from Healing Fund reimbursement, investment income, and global relations, among others.

Net expenses are divided into several different categories. The largest expense is programs (ministries of the General Synod) at 41 per cent, followed by Council of the North grants (25 per cent), administration (11 per cent), governance (11 per cent), the Anglican Journal (eight per cent) and the cost of the Church House building (four per cent).

The current application process for Council of the

North grants was developed in 2010-2011. Applications are made to the Grants Allocation Committee (GAC), with grants based on a combination of objective criteria and principles and guidelines to allow for the diversity of member dioceses. Accountability reports are submitted annually by the GAC. An annual five per cent decrease for Council of the North grants from 2012 to 2016 has been deferred indefinitely.

Regarding the other sources of expenditure for General Synod, net expenses are listed as \$2 million for the Anglican Journal, \$1.06 million for administration, \$917,000 for governance, \$740,000 for Resources for Mission, and \$497,000 for the building.

Goschy also laid out the figures for Ministry Investment Grants, which total \$103,000 in 2016 including \$90,000 for Indigenous Ministries, \$13,000 for Salal and Cedar, and \$15,000 grant for the Cuba Justice Camp in 2017.

Following the Financial Management Committee report, council members brought up the issue of how the church might diversify its sources of revenue—perhaps by finding opportunities for a more creative and entrepreneurial approach. General Secretary Michael Thompson expressed his support for finding new ways of doing things.

Council members then voted on three resolutions, which were all carried by consensus:

### **Resolution**

That the Council of General Synod approve the grants recommended by the Ministry Investment Fund Committee as outlined in document #007-33-15-11 totalling:

- \$103,000 for 2016
- \$15,000 for 2017

### **Resolution**

That the Council of General Synod approves the 2016 Budget with a surplus of \$40,800.

### **Resolution**

That the Ministry Investment Fund document be revised as indicated in document #007-34-15-11.

#### Background and Rationale

The current policy document was last revised by Council of General Synod on May 3, 2014. At the October 2015 meeting of Financial Management Committee it was noted that it would be more appropriate if the Ministry Investment Fund Committee recommended MIF grants to CoGS, and that CoGS approve these. Hence it is recommended that the word 'approved' be changed to 'recommended' in two instances in paragraph 1 on page 2 of the policy document.

### **Pension Office**

Jane Osler, a member of the Pension Committee, brought two motions to CoGS members.

The first resolution approved the recommendation of the Pension Committee to amend regulations to Canon VIII, broadening references to include provincial legislation, maintain consistency between different plan provisions, and clarify language. The second resolution asked CoGS to approve the committee's recommendation to amend regulation sections related to long-term disability.

Both resolutions were carried by consensus.

### **B.C. Yukon/Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior**

Chancellor David Jones brought forward a motion for the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior (APCI) to become a recognized territory. Jones recounted how APCI came into being after the diocese of Cariboo ceased to operate during the litigation about the residential schools. The

parishes involved continued to operate and eventually became known as APCI.

Under the terms of the resolution, the former territory of the Diocese of Cariboo would be transferred to APCI, which would then be able to elect delegates to General Synod. Following Jones' presentation, CoGS adopted the resolution by consensus, officially designating APCI a recognized territory.

### **Resolution**

Be it resolved that Council, on behalf of General Synod:

- a) pursuant to section 7 b) iii) of the Declaration of Principles, consent to the decision by the Synod of the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia and Yukon to re-arrange boundaries to transfer the territory of the Diocese of Cariboo to the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior; and
- b) confirm that the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior has the status of a diocese, and as such is entitled to membership in General Synod pursuant to section 8 of the Constitution.

### **Nominating Committee Report**

Archdeacon Deputy Prolocutor Cynthia Haines-Turner detailed vacancies in CoGS that had come up during the last triennium and how those vacancies were filled by different means. Two more vacancies remain to be filled, and nominations for the positions were to remain open until 9 p.m. on the evening of November 14.

*Council members broke for lunch.*

### **Working Group on the Marriage Canon**

Speaking to CoGS members, Bishop John Chapman of the Diocese of Ottawa, convener of

the Working Group on the Marriage Canon, explained that the group's task was to ultimately make recommendations to the Planning and Agenda Committee as to how General Synod would engage in discussion around changes to the Marriage Canon in 2016.

Bishop Chapman facilitated a discussion with council members by asking three questions. Table groups discussed and responded to each question for 10 minutes apiece and writing down the answers, which inform the recommendations of the working group to the Planning and Agenda Committee. The questions included:

- What processes have you experienced that have proven helpful in difficult conversations?
- How do you imagine the process around the Canon on Marriage unfolding at the General Synod?
- What would members of the General Synod need to help their conversations and discernment on the Canon on Marriage?

Following the discussion, Bishop Chapman asked whether there were any common threads that the table groups wished to communicate to other CoGS members. One table group brought up the need to educate General Synod members before they arrive at the meeting on particular themes such as how the rules of floor work, what it means to table, what vote percentages are necessary, and providing a clear explanation of the conscience clauses and its ramifications.

Another table group reiterated the need to promote a climate of respect between those on opposing sides of the same-sex marriage debate, which would help facilitate the conversation. They also pointed to the need to make the debate about more than ideology by focusing on mission, ministry, evangelism and the proclamation of the Gospel.

Other groups spoke about the need to provide translation for Indigenous General Synod members, the benefits of hearing stories from same-sex and heterosexual married couples, and

how to help youth and new members navigate the fast-paced environment of General Synod. Bishop Chapman thanked CoGS members for their input and said it would assist the Working Group in providing helpful advice to the Planning and Agenda Committee.

Before moving to the next item on the agenda, Archbishop Hiltz reported that the Rev. Andrew Wesley had been named an honorary canon for the diocese of Toronto. Prolocutor Harry Huskins moved that the council express its appreciation and congratulations to Canon Wesley. The resolution was carried.

### **General Synod Planning Committee**

Dean Peter Wall, chair of the General Synod Planning Committee, provided an update on preparations for the 41st General Synod, which will take place at the Sheridan Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill, Ont. from July 7-12, 2016.

"The General Synod Planning Committee is hard at work, with excellent membership and excellent health and excellent staff support," Dean Wall said. Displaying the logo for the event and its theme, "You Are My Witnesses," he moved into a discussion of various aspects of planning.

Describing the benefits of the venue, he noted that the hotel was small enough so that no one would have to walk long distances to get from point A to B. Hotel staff members were very attentive to church needs, while the facility itself was well-equipped with good spaces for offices, quiet rooms, prayer spaces and meals.

The registration and certification process is currently underway. The number of General Synod members in attendance is still being determined and will depend on diocesan response to statistical questions. Because of the change in size of General Synod—a result of the new formula for electing delegates based on the number of church attendees rather than licensed clergy—Wall estimated the size of the forthcoming General Synod as between 265 and 270 members, compared to 302 members at General Synod 2013. Also underway is the sponsorship and display

program. Thus far, the GSPC has secured three significant sponsorships..

The Worship Committee for the meeting of the General Synod has been doing very creative work to plan for worship. At a recent meeting, the GSPC saw a piece of fabric that served as a model for a material that will be unfolded at tables during General Synod, with members able to create art on the fabric using special pens.

Moving on to technical aspects of General Synod, Wall discussed the continuing use of clickers at the event, which will benefit from past experience using the devices to vote at diocesan synods and General Synod 2013. The GSPC is also presently negotiating with a company to provide simultaneous translation in up to three languages using headphones and booths. Current issues relate less to technology and equipment than to personnel and cost, but the committee remains strongly committed to providing simultaneous translation, which Wall said in his experience tends to positively effect the speed of work and the ability of people to listen and speak to each other.

Finally, the GSPC continues its commitment to a paperless meeting. As such, General Synod is exploring renting tablets for each delegate preloaded with a meeting app that would replace the need to print thousands of sheets of paper. Wall thanked Web Manager Brian Bukowski for his role in helping investigate the possibility of tablet use.

While not all three of the aforementioned technological aspects may be present at General Synod, Wall pledged to keep CoGS posted as the committee learned more. Online registration for General Synod 2016 is expected to begin in early February.

The hard work now begins in terms of laying out the agenda for the meeting of the General Synod. The GSPC is currently planning to hold Sunday worship as well as an opening and closing worship service at General Synod. Meanwhile, the Local Arrangements Committee is working with the diocese of Toronto, which recently held its own synod at the same venue, to organize

transportation.

After taking questions, Wall concluded the report by leading the council in prayer with a collect written for the next General Synod.

*Council members broke for coffee.*

### **Joint Declaration**

With CoGS and NCC members again brought together, the Rev. Paul Gehrs and Henriette Thompson report provided a progress report on the Joint Declaration made by ACoC and ELCIC at their 2013 Joint Assembly, which pledged Anglicans and Lutherans to focus their attention on homelessness and affordable housing as well as responsible resource extraction. Gehrs highlighted the increasing prominence since 2013 of a movement promoting divestment from fossil fuels, and noted that both the Primate and National Bishop had supported a meaningful discussion on divestment.

CoGS and NCC members were asked to discuss and reflect on two points. Firstly, the growing scientific consensus that the world's governments must find a way to keep the average increase in global temperature below two degrees Celsius; current emissions suggest the world is heading for a four-degree increase. Secondly, divestment from fossil fuels including coal, oil and natural gas is one mechanism to send a message that searching for untapped fossil fuels would undermine chances of keeping global temperature rise below two degrees.

Table groups then broke into discussion for 15 minutes responding to three questions:

- What are your reflections on the call to divest from fossil fuels and invest in alternative energy?
- How do we balance the seemingly competing interests of environment, jobs/sustainable livelihoods, and Indigenous rights?
- What do we need to take responsibility for in order to address the climate crisis?

In their responses, group representatives noted the complexity of the divestment issue. Some worried about the possibility of demonizing individuals and companies, which might affect people's livelihoods—drawing parallels to the tobacco, fur and mining industries. Others talked about the need for personal responsibility in reducing one's own environmental footprint alongside with collective actions such as divestment from fossil fuels.

The need for education to move forward and shift people's mindsets was a major theme. Members reacted favourably to the idea of drawing upon experts in different fields, including the energy sector, jobs and sustainable livelihoods, the environment and Indigenous issues. The Primate expressed his support for a panel to help provide such expertise as a prelude to discussion. He noted that the head table discussed that a facilitated session with experts in the energy, environmental and financial sectors would be helpful to deepen the council's understanding. He also noted that the Council could find such experts among within the Church and believes CoGS could honour those members by inviting them to participate in the discussion.

Gehrs thanked the members of CoGS and the NCC for their contributions, while Bishop Johnson thanked Thompson and Gehrs for helping members engage in an important discussion.

### **Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, Commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation**

The final report of the afternoon came from the Ven. Bruce Myers, ecumenical and interfaith coordinator for the ACoC, and the Rev. Andre Lavergne, assistant to the National Bishop, ecumenical and interfaith, who discussed ecumenical efforts related to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) and the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017.

Myers described the signing of the JDDJ in 1999 between the Vatican and the Lutheran World Foundation as a landmark theological agreement,

reaching consensus between Roman Catholics and Lutherans on basic truths related to the doctrine of justification—the concept that God removes the guilt and penalty of sin while declaring a sinner righteous through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. By signing the JDDJ, Roman Catholics and Lutherans established a basic consensus on justification, with differences attributable to viewing the matter in slightly different ways.

“The defining theological contention of the Reformation, which resulted in mutual condemnations, excommunications, executions and more than five centuries of formal separation between Lutherans and Catholics, had been resolved in fewer than three decades of peaceable dialogue in the 20th century,” Myers noted.

In 2006, seven years after the adoption of the JDDJ, the World Methodist Council voted unanimously to adopt the document. As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation approaches, the worldwide Anglican Communion is now contemplating a similar gesture. The Inter-Anglican Standing Committee on Unity, Faith and Order has asked that the next meeting of the communion in Lusaka, Zambia consider a resolution that the JDDJ gives an understanding to the doctrine of justification that is consistent with Anglican teachings.

A few months ago, General Secretary Michael Thompson delegated Myers with the task of responding on behalf of Canadian Anglicans. Myers asked a small group of distinguished theologians with a background in Anglican studies or systematic theology to provide Faith, Worship and Ministry with a report on the matter. He received responses from four theologians in the form of one joint report and two individual reports, which approached the issue differently but all concluded that the JDDJ was consonant with Anglican teachings and that the church should formally affirm this.

As a result, Myers said, the Faith, Worship and Ministry Coordinating Committee has requested that CoGS pass a resolution at the current meeting that the ACoC consider a resolution of its own affirming the JDDJ, which has the potential to

create further unity between different churches.

In his own remarks, Lavergne reported on preparations for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. He directed CoGS and NCC members to documents on the commemoration, which members would soon be receiving in electronic form. Aside from marking the anniversary of the Reformation, 2017 also represents the 50th anniversary of the beginning of international ecumenical dialogue between Lutherans and Roman Catholics. The willingness of Roman Catholics to engage in such dialogue, he noted, coloured the entire approach to the anniversary of the Reformation.

“If it were not for the fact that in the early 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church opened its windows and doors to world beyond itself and invited conversation, we wouldn’t be talking commemoration today,” Lavergne said. “We likely would be talking celebration.”

Among the goals set out in the commemoration documents for the ELCIC as a member of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Lavergne pointed to the need to strengthen both its relationship with other member churches and its ecumenical commitment, as well as to re-affirm the ELCIC’s commitment to justice and peace. He noted that the Lutheran theme for the Reformation anniversary, Liberated by God’s Grace, and its three subthemes (Salvation—Not for Sale, Human Beings—Not for Sale, and Creation—Not for Sale) had resonated with Catholics, giving them insight into their own journey.

Recently, the ELCIC has begun conversations with the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops, using the lens of baptism to look at its imperatives for the Reformation anniversary with a view to joint prayer and achieving a critical mass of Catholics and Lutherans working together. Lavergne noted that Lutherans were also open to participation with Catholics on working together to sponsor refugees.

The ELCIC, he added, is expecting observances related to the Reformation anniversary at the upcoming Canadian Lutheran Anglican Youth

gathering in 2016 and the next national convention of the ELCIC itself in 2017.

Following the report, Bishop Johnson thanked Myers and Lavergne for the work they do on behalf of the two churches.

Before members left for supper, Archbishop Hiltz brought their attention to the departure of Adele Finney as executive director of the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund. The Primate praised her engagement with other churches and their relief and development agencies within the Anglican Communion and Canada itself. He expressed the gratitude of the church for her work and its basis in a strong spiritual grounding. All members present burst into applause and gave Finney a standing ovation.

*Council members broke for hospitality and dinner.*

### **Market Place**

Council members broke into individual groups for discussion on the work of different ministries. Groups included Communications and Information Resources, Resources for Mission, Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice, Partners in Mission, and the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund.

### **Holden Evening Prayer**

The main part of the Saturday agenda concluded with a Holden Evening Prayer in the chapel of the Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre.

*Council members broke for hospitality.*

### **Planning and Agenda Team**

Members of the Planning and Agenda Team met in the Grandin Room of the facility after evening prayer.