

# COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Thursday, November 17, 2016

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

## **Eucharist**

The first meeting of the Council of General Synod (CoGS) for the new triennium began with an opening worship service and Eucharist that celebrated the discipleship of Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln.

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, provided a homily in which he praised Hugh as embodying the virtues of sanctity, holiness, and friendship. Drawing on a passage from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the Primate used the metaphor of connective tissue to describe the role of CoGS in drawing the church together, uniting it in common cause, and moving it forward.

## **Opening Remarks**

The Primate expressed his great pleasure to welcome members to the present council and outlined some of the major responsibilities of CoGS and its goals for the coming triennium.

He recounted conversations he had since General Synod revolving around developments on both same-sex marriage and Indigenous ministries. The church, Archbishop Hiltz said, is working on its next steps "pastorally, prophetically, and structurally" towards self-determination for Indigenous Anglicans.

Archbishop Hiltz reiterated that proposed changes to the marriage canon must now go back to dioceses and ecclesial provinces for deliberation. At the recent meeting of the House of Bishops, the bishops discussed the situation in each of their dioceses and had an open and frank conversation

on the subject, recognizing that deep divisions remain. Going forward this triennium, the House of Bishops seeks to focus less on same-sex marriage and more on how to best exercise their apostolic ministry as leaders of the church.

Returning to the theme of General Synod, "You Are My Witnesses", which has since become the theme of the 2016-2019 triennium, the Primate explained how that theme is embodied in the varied ministries of the church.

Whether by supporting Indigenous Anglicans in their journey toward self-determination, working on deep divisions over sexuality, promoting suicide prevention programs, feeding the hungry, caring for the poor, welcoming refugees, responding to humanitarian emergencies through the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, journeying in solidarity with pipeline protesters in Standing Rock, working with partners in the Anglican Communion to end human trafficking and modern slavery, planting trees with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), or deepening global, ecumenical and interfaith partnerships—in each of these ways, the Primate said church members are acting on God's call in our lives, "You Are My Witnesses".

*Members broke for coffee from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.*

## **Orientation and Community Building**

Council members moved into the Michael Smith Room after the break and stood on a giant map of Canada to take part in an orientation exercise. Deputy Prolocutor Lynne McNaughton had members move to different locations on the map based on different questions, such as asking them to move to their ecclesial province, diocese, place of baptism, or a place they could visit if they wanted to worship in a different language. A

notable instance involved asking them to move to where their great-grandparents had lived—with many council members finding themselves standing outside the map entirely.

After the exercise, council moved back into their table groups in the Joseph Cebula Room, where Dean Peter Wall, co-chair of the Planning and Agenda Team, led a subsequent community building activity in which each group discussed with each other details of their baptisms or the last sermon they heard on Sunday. In the final exercise, council members wrote positive things that they took out of General Synod onto sticky notes and posted their notes on the wall.

Dean Wall read out a list of council members who had sent regrets for the meeting.

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

### **Bible Study**

Following an opening hymn, McNaughton led a Bible study to kick off the afternoon. Table groups read out a passage from Ephesians 4 and reflected on the excerpt using a series of discussion questions.

### **Group Activity**

General Secretary Michael Thompson introduced another group activity based around a wall map of Canada, which he pointed out did not show any ecclesial provinces or dioceses. The goal of the exercise was to encourage council members to see themselves as coming from part of the land.

Each council member placed a sticker with the Anglican Church of Canada logo on the map to show where they came from, then placed a card along the borders on which each member wrote their name and the gift or passion they brought to the work and life of CoGS. Among the qualities different members saw themselves bringing to the table were a love of the gospel, attention and curiosity, concern for the earth, passion for social justice, and a sense of the mystery of God.

The general secretary led members in a prayer following the exercise.

### **Consensus Decision-Making**

Prolocutor Cynthia Haines-Turner explained to CoGS members the method for evaluating levels of consensus when reaching decisions based on the number of fingers displayed in raised hands. Five fingers indicate strong support for a decision, fewer fingers mean less support, and a closed fist indicates a need to discuss the matter further.

### **Meeting Norms**

Council members received a sheet detailing the norms for proper conduct in table group discussions. They reviewed the norms and were given an opportunity to raise any questions.

*Council members broke for coffee from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.*

### **Church House and the Church**

The meeting resumed with an announcement that Donna Bomberry had been appointed by the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) as a member of the Planning and Agenda Team.

Michael Thompson then provided council members with an overview of the work of the coordinating committees and standing committees of General Synod, naming the chair of each committee, the CoGS member assigned to it, and the director.

Committees include:

- *Faith, Worship, and Ministry*, active with initiatives such as the Vital and Healthy Parishes project and efforts to update hymn books by the Hymn Book Supplement Task Force. Other task forces have produced new resources related to the theology of money and physician-assisted dying.
- *Partners in Mission*. Includes Global Relations, which helps sustain relationships with key global partners, such as the Episcopal Church of Cuba, the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, and companion dioceses in Africa. Leads emerging focus for church on ending human trafficking and modern slavery.
- *Public Witness for Social and Ecological Justice*. With enormous attention across

the church focused on issues of public witness, much of their work in the last triennium involved areas outlined in the Joint Declaration with the ELCIC—homelessness, affordable housing, and responsible resource extraction—as well as the Working Group on Responsible Investment.

- *Communications and Information Resources.* A notable project is the new mission-focused church calendar, produced in partnership with the ELCIC. Thompson believed there is much potential for a coordinated mission focus in communications.
- *Anglican Journal.* Much of the committee's work involves overseeing how the *Journal* can be a servant of the church, which Thompson described as an opportunity and challenge that the *Journal* shares with diocesan newspapers.
- *Financial Management.* A larger committee that meets face-to-face each year of the triennium and forwards the annual budget to CoGS for consideration, the Financial Management committee handles the National Insurance Program as well as regular financial audits.
- *Resources for Mission.* Currently in a pending position with respect to ministry and relation to raising funds for church. Stewardship has been a major focus of late.

The General Secretary also highlighted the work of the Primate's Office as well as Indigenous Ministries. While noting that the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) could speak more fully about the latter, Thompson wished to acknowledge the work of Indigenous Ministries as something emerging with vitality at every level of the church, and expressed his deep appreciation for their efforts.

### ***The Church: Towards a Common Vision***

Eileen Scully, director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry, introduced a document to council members that would serve as the official response of the Anglican Church of Canada to Faith and

Order Paper No. 214 from the World Council of Churches (WCC), *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*. The WCC had requested that member churches provide official responses by the end of 2016 answering specific questions about the paper.

Council members received the document with the understanding that they would vote later in the meeting on whether to approve it and send it to the WCC.

### **Elections and Nominations**

McNaughton presented resolutions from the Nominating Committee regarding members nominated for various committees.

Members supported amendment to add a to-be-announced member of ACIP on the Responsible Investment Working Group. All resolutions were subsequently carried.

The deputy prolocutor also discussed nominations for elections to the Ministry Investment Fund subcommittee of the Financial Management Committee, which were scheduled to take place on Saturday morning, and noted that council members in June 2017 would need to elect individuals to the 2019 Anglican Consultative Council.

### **Resolution**

That the Council of General Synod appoint the following individuals to the Responsible Investment Working Group:

- The Rev. Tim Dobbin (Creation Matters Working Group)
- Jeremy Munn (Diocese of Athabasca)
- Rob Saffrey (Financial Management Committee)
- Elin Goulden (Toronto)
- The Rev. Monique Stone (Ottawa)
- Bishop Barbara Andrews (Territory of the People)
- Dave McNicol (Investment Subcommittee)
- Kevin Thomas (SHARE – Shareholders' Association for Research and Education)

- The Rev. Canon Ken Gray (Creation Matters Working Group)
- TBA (appointed by Pension Trustees)
- TBA (appointed by ACIP)

### Resolution

That the Council of General Synod appoint the following individuals to the Audit Committee for the 2016-2019 triennium:

- The Most Rev. Colin Johnson – reappointment as chair
- Philip Arthur – reappointment
- Peter Lewis – reappointment
- Paul Singleton – reappointment
- James Sweeny – member of the Financial Management Committee 2016-2019

### Governance Working Group

With the meeting running ahead of schedule, Haines-Turner took the opportunity to provide information to members on the Governance Working Group and its relation to CoGS in setting out and implementing direction and policies set by General Synod.

Prior to dinner, the Primate noted various prayers that had been made for the present CoGS, including at that day's chapel service in Church House in Toronto, a message from the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, and intercession prayers from the Mission to Seafarers.

*Members broke for hospitality and dinner from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.*

### Evening Prayer

Peter Wall led the evening prayer session, which was largely sung.

### Our Church's Response to the TRC

Esther Wesley, coordinator of the Anglican Fund for Healing and Reconciliation (AFHR), began discussion on the church's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) by outlining the work of the Healing Fund.

Established in 1991 to address the impact of

residential schools on Indigenous peoples, the AFHR sought to educate the church about the legacy of the schools and has been engaged in projects across the country. From 1992 to spring 2016, the Anglican Church of Canada has supported a total of 654 projects with an expenditure of \$7,359,209. At any given moment, work with the AFHR involves between 70 to 80 different groups.

Among the principles established at the inception of the AFHR were "that the Indigenous people must be the ones who describe the issue and direct the response", and "that the church support healing processes that arise from the Indigenous communities," i.e. that the national church respond to requests from those communities.

Wesley outlined some of the major themes of projects that the church has financed through the AFHR. These themes include:

- Training/community building, such as skills related to parenting, counselling, and group support leadership;
- Program design and setup/program enhancement, encompassing the development of community healing programs, the enhancement of existing healing programs, and research;
- Knowledge building, based on educating people about traditional cultural practices and values (through activities such as wilderness retreats, elder teaching, and ceremonies), histories (of nations, communities, Indian residential schools, or colonialism), and the impact of the residential school system including loss of traditional languages;
- Community healing services such as individual and group counselling or therapy, including through traditional methods;
- Resource development, e.g. the development of curriculums, books, community and liturgical resources;
- Reunions of individuals that grew up together in institutions, an activity that has seen a sharp increase since the TRC particularly in Ontario;

- Language/translations, helping preserve Indigenous languages through projects such as Bible translations; and
- Work with children and youth.

In addition, Wesley provided council member with a list of projects organized by diocese and province from 1992 to 2016, along with expenditures. Most of the projects took place in British Columbia and Ontario, which respectively saw 206 and 217 projects funded by the AFHR to the tune of more than \$2 million in each province. Wesley noted the larger amounts spent in these provinces were due to more infrastructure being present in those areas compared to a more isolated region such as Nunavut, where the church spent \$59,389 on seven projects through the AFHR.

Following her presentation, the General Secretary thanked Wesley and praised her ministry on behalf of the church, noting the calm, courage, and resilience she displayed in acting as a bridge between her church and communities across Canada. Thompson also thanked Archivist Nancy Hurn for her work in ensuring that the story of the Indian residential school system and their survivors endures.

Council members then lined up at microphones and read out *An Action in Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada*, a local response to the Primate's call earlier in the year for every parish to read the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on June 21, 2016, the National Aboriginal Day of Prayer. The reading intersperses TRC principles with sections of the UN Declaration, along with prayers.

Following the reading, CoGS members each received a copy of *Wrongs to Rights: How Churches Can Engage the United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, a special issue of the magazine *Intotemak* published by the Mennonite Church Canada. The deputy prolocutor invited members to read various texts in the book silently to themselves and reflect upon them through discussions with their table groups. Lively conversations ensued, and upon wrapping up the discussion period, McNaughton said that the

church would keep this broad conversation going into the future.

Concluding the evening, members lit candles and held them in the darkness as Archbishop Hiltz led the council in prayer for residential school survivors.

*Council members adjourned for the day at 9:30 p.m.*