

COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

Monday, May 5, 2014

Council members gathered at 8:45am for morning prayers and Bible study. The last day of business meetings began at 9:30am.

Orders of the Day

Planning and Agenda Team co-chair Jane Osler reviewed a revised agenda with Council members. The day's schedule was adjusted to allow for more follow-up time for the Commission on the Marriage Canon and the Settlement Agreement.

Commission on the Marriage Canon

The General Secretary, the Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson, invited Council members into conversation about the four options before them regarding submissions to the Commission on the Marriage Canon. He asked those gathered to reflect on the options and to think about a preferred option and to think about options, if any, that individual members might not be able to support.

Resolution

CoGS adjourned and reconvened as Committee of the Whole.

Canon David Jones suggested a clarifying rewording of the second option to read, "The general rule is that all submissions to the Commission will be posted on the web with attributions, but a person intending to make a submission, prior to making the submission, may request permission from the Commission for their submission to be posted on the web without attribution, and the Commission may for good reason grant that request."

Discussion followed and there was no clear emerging consensus on any of the options as presented. The small working group made up of the General Secretary, the Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson, the Very Rev. Peter Wall, and Canon David Jones was asked to do more work on the wording of the options and report back at 11am.

New Ways of Working

Ms. Osler introduced a table group discussion on the "New Ways of Working" for Coordinating Committees. Groups were asked to discuss what they needed to know to effectively evaluate how well the Coordinating Committees are working for CoGS.

Commission on the Marriage Canon

The working group returned with another rewording of the second option for submissions to the Commission on the Marriage Canon. Though the spirit of the option remained unchanged, it was rewritten for the sake of brevity and clarity. "All submissions will be posted to the web with attribution. However, prior to receiving a submission, the Commission may for good reason grant a request that a submission be posted without attribution."

Mr. Jones suggested an earlier straw vote indicated that two options were incongruent with the emerging consensus of the room. The Council indicated mixed support for the four options and for further discussion on any number of these options.

The working group was then tasked to return to the Council with a specific recommendation for members to vote on.

Joint Assembly and Joint COGS/NCC

The Very Rev. Peter Wall presented two motions to the Council on meetings with Anglican full communion partners, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. He noted that given the schedules for national meetings in the ACC and ELCIC, the next possible Joint Assembly could be held in 2019. He also indicated that there has been much positive feedback expressing the value of joint Council of General Synod - National Church Council meetings.



Resolution

Committee of the whole adjourned and reconvened as CoGS.

Resolution

That the Council of General Synod approve holding a joint meeting with the ELCIC National Church Council (NCC) November 13-15, 2015. Adopted

That the Council of General Synod approve in principle holding a Joint Assembly with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada in 2019. Adopted

Archbishop Fred Hiltz noted that similar resolutions were passed in the National Church Council in the ELCIC.

Partner Presentations

Primate's World Development and Relief Fund

The Rev. Laura Marie Piotrowicz, PWRDF representative to CoGS and member of the PWRDF board, presented a report from the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund.

She introduced Council members to a weekly multimedia prayer resource developed by PWRDF as a way to connect lectionary readings to relevant justice stories.

Ms. Piotrowicz noted that the Youth Council had just finished their meetings and that it will soon be releasing a food security resource based on the popular film series the Hunger Games.

She oriented the Council to the latest "Fredism" from the Fred Says campaign. The late spring portion of the campaign focusses on delivering hot meals to children in Haiti. "Under the Sun," the PWRDF insert in the *Anglican Journal* will also cover the food security campaign.

Two staff from PWRDF will host a week-long food security course this summer at the Sorrento Centre in British Columbia.

Turning to news from PWRDF committees, Ms. Piotrowicz noted that some policies are being rewritten for the sake of clarity and relevance, work is underway on a new strategic plan to connect better with constituents, and that PWRDF is in a healthy financial position.

Ms. Piotrowicz concluded her remarks with the good news that PWRDF has received Imagine Canada certification, which helps Canadian charities monitor and improve their performance.

Executive Director Adele Finney updated the Council on work PWRDF is doing on maternal, newborn, and child health. Two documents are under production. The first details the history and scope of this issue within PWRDF's work. The second covers guiding principles on maternal, newborn, and child health that will be used when looking at potential partnership. The authors also suggested some research principles that PWRDF can bring to research partnerships.

Ms. Finney noted PWRDF's upcoming participation in a high-level summit on maternal, newborn, and child health convened by Prime Minister Stephen Harper for late May 2014.

Ms. Finney took time to introduce Council members to the work of the Anglican Alliance. PWRDF is the Anglican Church of Canada's representative to the alliance, which attends to relief, development, and advocacy throughout the world. The vision for Anglican Alliance emerged from the 2008 Lambeth Conference as a way to address and overcome poverty and injustice.

Anglican Alliance is developing an interactive global map of development, relief, and advocacy work being carried out in Anglican dioceses around the world. So far there is one entry for the Anglican Church of Canada - the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador. Ms. Finney said there will be a push to get all dioceses on this map.

Ms. Finney spent the second half of her report sharing photos, updates, and stories from a recent partnership visit to the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan. She thanked the Canadian church for their outpouring of support for relief work in areas that were devastated by this natural disaster.

At the end of the PWRDF report, Bishop Lydia Mamakwa reminded the Council that "third world conditions" exist in our midst in Canada and that there is a need for similar relief and development work close to home.

Ms. Finney responded and said that the strategic planning survey indicated that PWRDF should address Canadian Indigenous communities as well and that the organization is in conversation with ACIP. "There is a commitment to find new ways of working," promised Ms. Finney.



Partner Reflections: The Episcopal Church

Ms. Martha Gardner thanked the members for great meetings and noted with appreciation the *esprit de corps* and impressive level of engagement throughout the Council's time together.

She shared two highlights from The Episcopal Church that may be of interest to CoGS and the Anglican Church of Canada. First, at the upcoming 2015 General Convention in Salt Lake City, a task force for reimagining the church will deliver its report. Constituents are invited to participate and monitor this conversation through social media, web, and print resources. Second, a presiding bishop will be elected at this gathering. Terms are nine years and the nominating committee has been meeting regularly. The committee will be publishing a profile of what they are looking for in August.

Ms. Gardner also noted with appreciation the willingness of the group to revisit important issues despite time constraints and affirmed CoGS's work on understanding conflict and disagreement.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Ms. Pat Lovell, ELCIC representative to CoGS, mentioned worship and bible study, and community building time as highlights of her time with the Council. She said this established a "foundation for open and trusting conversations" and that the room was "always warm, always welcoming."

She noted with appreciation strong presentations on social justice issues, which are near and dear to her heart and the heart of her denomination. These included the PWRDF presentation, Dr. Andrea Mann's presentation on Israel/Palestine, the emergence of an Indigenous diocese, and the global work the Primate highlighted.

She urged Council members to keep up their demonstrated thoughtfulness and willingness to listen in their work on Indigenous rights and the Commission on the Marriage Canon. She suggested using listening circles and caring conversations as a means of discernment and ensuring that those who feel vulnerable can be included.

Commission on the Marriage Canon

Canon David Jones presented the Council with a proposal on behalf of the small working group.

He suggested that the Council vote on option one - that "all submissions to the commission will be posted on the web with attribution." He said this is the option that best embodies the transparency mandated by the Terms of References for the Commission, and it also has the potential to minimize gossip, and protects the Commission from criticism it might receive in exercising discretion about un-attributed submissions.

Resolution

That all submissions to the Commission will be posted on the web with attribution. Adopted

The Primate offered words of appreciation for the care that Mr. Jones, Mr. Wall, Mr. Thompson, and Ms. Haines-Turner took in helping Council through this conversation.

Settlement Agreement

Mr. Jones noted that there was not enough time to revisit the Settlement Agreement conversation, but that there was some time for Council to reflect before decisions need to be made.

Key Messages

Jane Osler asked members to prepare key messages emerging from their last day of meetings. These will be given to the General Secretary as he develops a report that the Council may use in reporting back to Ecclesiastical Provinces. This report will also go to bishops and diocesan offices.

Ms. Osler shared some preliminary key messages. These included strong relationships to and within the Anglican Communion, the strength of the award-winning *Anglican Journal*, and that finances of General Synod are in good shape.

The Primate's shift in language from gestures of reconciliation, to gestures toward reconciliation resonated with Council members.

Ms. Osler said she was seeing in key messages very positive responses and thank yous for reports from the different groups and departments. Members found them helpful and interesting.

The spring 2014 Council of General Synod meetings concluded with a litany of thanksgiving led by the Primate. Dean Peter Wall said grace and the meeting adjourned at 12pm.

