

# COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

November 18, 2011

The first day of COGS's fall 2011 meeting began with worship and Bible study. At this meeting, members are examining the theme of leadership in Numbers 11.

At 10:00, council gathered for business. The Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, announced that this was the first meeting for the new General Secretary, the Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson. The Primate also welcomed new members, including the Rev. Norm Casey, co-chair of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, and the Very Rev. Peter Elliott, the new chair of the Planning and Agenda Team.

The Primate also shared regrets from members who could not attend. He noted that Bishop Tom Morgan has also resigned as chaplain of COGS.

## **Vision 2019 Implementation Team**

The Ven. P.J. Hobbs, chair of the Vision 2019 Implementation Team, led an engaging two-hour session on how the church is living out its strategic plan, Vision 2019.

The team, which held its first meeting in the fall, has defined the scope of their work and consulted with staff and leaders of Church House. Mr. Hobbs confirmed that there is already evidence of movement in all areas of the Vision 2019 timeline.

After "shouting out" what they remembered from the Marks of Mission and Vision 2019 priorities and practices, members heard from a staff communications team that was tasked to promote the Marks of Mission throughout the national church.

The multi-faceted Marks of Mission promotion strategy includes print materials, three contests (relating to Sunday school curriculum, songs, and visual art) and a Mission Moments website. The website is a video project where people can share their two-minute stories of where they have seen God working in their lives.

The communications team emphasized that they are

presenting the Marks of Mission not as a memorization exercise but as a framework to identify and support current ministry.

Mr. Hobbs, Mr. Elliott, and General Synod's Senior Manager of Communications Bev Murphy shared stories of where they had seen the Marks of Mission and Vision 2019 at work. COGS members then shared their own stories in small groups. The session closed with a brainstorming session in which members shared ideas to keep in mind as the church moves forward into Vision 2019.

*COGS members took a lunch break.*

## **Together in Mission**

Monica Patten, chair of the Resources for Mission Committee, gave an overview of Together in Mission, the nationwide initiative to identify and gather new financial resources for ministries that strengthen God's mission.

COGS received a Together in Mission "case for support" document that will be tested throughout the Anglican Church of Canada. Resources for Mission is testing a financial goal of \$25 million new (not reallocated) funds to be raised over five years. This would be raised through some major gifts but also modest contributions from average Anglicans.

The campaign seeks to address four broad challenges: leadership, worship, sharing (with partner churches), and peace and justice.

"These are areas that are presently unfunded or underfunded and we hope to make them sustainable," said Ms. Patten.

Resources for Mission will work closely with dioceses as they plan their own fundraising case for support. Each diocese will be invited to develop and launch own ideas and to present the General Synod story wrapped in its own case. Already General Synod is in conversation

with eight dioceses and will test this case for support with three dioceses.

Ms. Patten noted that Resources for Mission has signed an agreement with M&M (Money and Ministry) International to support this work. At the next COGS meeting they will report again on challenges and successes.

Ms. Patten and Vianney (Sam) Carriere, director of the Resources for Mission Department, answered questions about Together in Mission.

#### **Resolution**

Council approved a resolution to endorse the document entitled "Together in Mission: the Whole Church for the Whole World," as appropriate for the use in testing a case for support for the ministries of the General Synod.

#### **Budget presentation**

COGS members heard a detailed presentation of the budget from Rob Dickson, chair of the Financial Management and Development Committee, and Michèle George, General Synod treasurer.

First, members paused to mark the recent death of Mike Wellwood, a committed volunteer who served for many years on the Financial Management and Development Committee.

Mr. Dickson began his presentation by noting that Management Team had honoured COGS's 2008 request to eliminate deficit budgeting by 2012. General Synod in fact achieved this goal one year early, with a balanced budget in 2011.

The format of the 2012 budget also honours a request from COGS that Management Team develop a longer-term budget projection. At this meeting, COGS received a budget for 2012, a forecast for 2013 and 2014, and a two-year trend (2015 and 2016). This new format and process allows COGS to be more proactive in establishing General Synod priorities.

Mr. Dickson noted that at this point, with current revenue projections, 2012 and 2013 project balanced budgets. However, the 2012 budget and initiatives would not be possible without support from the Ministry Investment Fund.

The Ministry Investment Fund (MIF) was established in 2010 and will be funded by 90 per cent of unrestricted

bequests to the national church. Up to \$250,000 a year is available to General Synod ministries as seed funding for new ministry initiatives; funding for single-purpose, time-limited projects; or funding for specific transition initiatives that support Vision 2019.

Applications to MIF are reviewed and approved by a committee of the Primate, the Prolocutor and General Secretary in consultation with the treasurer.

Ms. George emphasized that from 2014 onward, General Synod needs to stabilize revenues. Currently proportional giving from dioceses makes up 67% of General Synod's budget. This giving has been decreasing by 3% annually. If this trend continues, by 2014 COGS may once again face the reshaping of national programs.

Turning to the subject of expenses, Ms. George reviewed Management Team's careful development of the budget so it would be in line with the Marks of Mission and Vision 2019.

Ms. George noted several changes to the budget, including a commitment to launch the Together in Mission campaign and a slight decrease in the grant to the Council of the North, as requested by the council.

COGS members had an opportunity to examine the budget and to ask questions. Further questions will be submitted and discussed on Saturday, when a resolution to pass the budget will be before the council.

#### **Governance Working Group**

David Phillip Jones, chair of the Governance Working Group, gave a brief overview of the eight files his committee is handing. This work includes

- Preparing a preliminary report on the legal and constitutional issues presented to the Canadian church by the proposed Anglican Covenant.
- Continuing work on the structure of the National Indigenous Ministry relating to the size, composition, and selection of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Sacred Circle, as well as the method of selecting any future National Indigenous Anglican Bishop.
- Working on a canon for the structure of the Military Ordinariate with a particular focus on the method of selecting any future Bishop Ordinary of the Forces.

- Considering the legal and canonical consequences if the church were to cease to be agents of the state in performing marriages for the purposes of civil law.

### **De-incorporation of the Journal**

Mr. Carriere, speaking as director of Communications and Information Resources, updated COGS on the de-incorporation of the Anglican Journal. At its last meeting, COGS passed a resolution to wind up the Anglican Journal Corporation and bring it back into General Synod. This decision was made at the request of the Anglican Journal Board, which was seeking to be more efficient with administrative costs and human resources.

Mr. Carriere said it was expected that the Anglican Journal would be transferred from the corporation to General Synod by Jan. 1, 2012.

The Communications and Information Resources Committee was asked by COGS to consider governance for the Anglican Journal. The committee proposed that the new Journal committee would include members of the Communications and Information Resources Committee, plus a new chair and a representative, recommended by the Anglican Editors' Association and appointed by the Primate.

Bishop Colin Johnson asked that the terms of reference be modified to clarify the Journal's policy of editorial independence. This line was then added from the handbook: "When expression of opinion conflicts with official church policy, as stated by decisions of the General Synod or the Council of General Synod, the newspaper will, at the same time, carry an explanation by an informed spokesperson of the official position of the church." Mr. Carriere agreed to this friendly amendment.

#### **Resolution**

COGS approved the new terms of reference and membership for the Anglican Journal committee.

The council also approved the appointment of a committee having this membership and terms of reference and asked that this request be taken to General Synod with the appropriate consequential amendments to the constitution and Appendix C to the handbook.

### **Introduction to consensus decision-making**

Mr. Elliott, chair of the Planning and Agenda Team, led COGS through a review of its consensus decision-making process. In 2007, the council decided to use this new model though in certain cases it sometimes still uses traditional votes.

Mr. Elliott reminded members of the Quaker roots of consensus decision-making and suggested a way of indicating their approval by raising a certain number of fingers.

COGS members reflected on the usefulness of this model. Some expressed concern that the process did not adequately record disagreement with motions. Others celebrated this new method and said it could help the council slow down and explore the Holy Spirit's movement in a meeting.

*At 5:00, council ended their session to celebrate the ministry of outgoing General Secretary Michael Pollesel. Members enjoyed an Italian-themed dinner, which included checkered tablecloths, a serenading accordionist, and heartfelt speeches in Michael's honour.*

### **Fireside chat**

At 7:45, council reconvened for a "fireside chat" with the Primate and the new General Secretary, the Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson. The conversation was hosted by the prolocutor, Canon Robert Falby.

Mr. Thompson reflected on a wide range of topics, from the responsibilities of the General Secretary to how he views administration as ministry. Here are some key quotes from the evening:

On Indigenous Ministries: "Our relationship with Indigenous Peoples has the opportunity to be exemplary in Canadian civil society."

On Anglican-Lutheran relations: "How do we invite each other out of the grooves we've found great comfort in and into some new practices and possibilities?"

On ecumenical relations: "The brands matter less and less. It's about meaningful engagement with a God who loves us. The ecumenical agenda is now the agenda of the missional church."

Mr. Thompson ended by reading "Miracle," by Irish poet Seamus Heaney.

*At 9:00, COGS closed with night prayer.*

# COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

November 19, 2011

*Council of General Synod (COGS) members began the second day of their fall meeting with a Bible study at 9:00. At 9:45 they gathered for business.*

## **Faith, Worship, and Ministry**

The Rev. Canon Andrew Asbil, chair of the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee (FWMC), led a presentation on the committee's work. He explained that the committee had divided itself into four sub-groups in order to better organize their work: Worship; Anglican, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Relationships; Ethics and Public Life; and Congregational Life and Leadership.

Mr. Asbil shared highlights of this work: the Worship group is producing a supplement to Common Praise. The congregational life and leadership group is working on making Vision 2019 a priority, and the Anglican, Ecumenical, and Interfaith Relationships group is working on theological issues surrounding the Anglican Covenant.

FWMC is also seeking to fill two vacancies following the retirement of Bishop George Bruce and the resignation of Sister Constance Joanna, SSJD. The General Secretary will work on fulfilling this request.

The Rev. Dr. Lynne McNaughton, FWMC member, noted that three General Synod groups are working on different aspects of the Anglican Covenant. The Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, and the chancellor, David Phillip Jones, clarified that covenant-related work from FWMC and the Governance Working Group will be gathered by the Anglican Communion Working Group and will inform a resolution on the Anglican Covenant that will be brought to General Synod 2013.

Dr. Lela Zimmer, FWMC committee member, updated the council on FWMC's work on the solemnization of marriage. General Synod 2010 had asked FWMC to examine implications that might arise if the Anglican Church of Canada moved from solemnizing marriages to a European model of blessing civil unions.

At COGS's spring 2011 meeting, FWMC asked for

clarification on this task, then produced a report that addresses questions, implications and potential effects (canonical, liturgical, theological, and missional) of several options before the church.

Ms. Zimmer said that this report did not address all aspects of the issue, although it synthesized the information that FWMC received from those consulted.

The Primate noted that the House of Bishops will be discussing this report at their meeting next week.

### **Resolution**

Council received the FWMC report on the General Synod resolution on the solemnization of matrimony.

### **Resolution**

COGS received the FWMC call for nominations for delegates to the 10th assembly of the World Council of Churches (for use in its appointment process).

## **Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples**

COGS members gathered in a sacred circle for the presentation from the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop and the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP). The Rev. Norm Casey, co-chair of ACIP, welcomed members to the sacred circle and said this was an opportunity to experience this different way of meeting.

The ACIP report began with a prayer and a gospel reading. National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald then described the faith among Indigenous Anglicans but also their crises. He reminded members of the drug abuse, alcoholism and suicides that many members experience in their home communities.

Bishop MacDonald said these crises dominated recent ACIP meetings, and provided the impetus to write the Mississauga Declaration, an urgent cry for self-determination. Bishop MacDonald emphasized that



these communities longed for sovereign identity and pastoral care.

ACIP will work on an aggressive timeline to achieve these goals: Sacred Circle in August 2012 will refine this work and COGS will receive a detailed description of an Indigenous ministry plan at their spring 2012 meeting.

"We're looking for practical accommodation to the culture and boundaries of Indigenous life," said Bishop MacDonald. "We're asking that you accommodate them within your structures."

COGS members then reflected on the presentation. Some said they were honoured to be in the sacred circle. Others expressed concern that the slowness of the non-Indigenous church to embrace the challenges identified in the presentation might mean that they might lose the opportunity to participate in the rich new possibilities spoken about. The Primate said he thought this was an Advent moment for the church: "The time is for this work is now," he said.

*COGS members took a lunch break.*

When COGS reconvened, the Primate said that he was deeply moved by the ACIP presentation. He suggested that COGS respond with a formal resolution.

#### **Resolution**

COGS received the Mississauga Declaration in a spirit of great respect and hope. They identified it as a gracious invitation and urgent call to walk and work with Indigenous Peoples.

#### **Budget session two:**

Bishop James Cowan, member of the Financial Management and Development Committee, reviewed the comments that COGS members had submitted about the budget. The questions largely dealt with priorities and revenues.

Bishop Cowan and Treasurer Michèle George answered a variety of questions. Among other responses, they clarified the purpose of the General Synod Officers' Discretionary Fund. Ms. George explained that this was not for new initiatives or program funding, but for unplanned one-time items, for example, legal fees or emergency staff coverage.

#### **Resolution**

COGS adopted the General Synod budget for core operations for 2012 with a surplus of

\$4,512 and the forecast for 2013 and 2014.

#### **Resolution**

COGS resolved to ratify grants approved by the Ministry Investment Fund committee totaling \$250,000 for 2011 and \$130,000 for 2012.

#### **Resolution**

COGS resolved to authorize the use of previously allocated funds of \$268,640 from 2011 to be expended in 2012 for Together in Mission and Stewardship Education Initiatives.

COGS then discussed how they should set priorities for future budgets. Some members raised concerns that although the budget is currently balanced, the church will again be facing serious financial pressure in 2013.

Others wondered, drawing on the ACIP presentation, if they could create a church structure that the poor could afford. Still others suggested that the "church's institutionalism needs to decrease so that Jesus can increase."

#### **Anglican Foundation**

The Rev. Canon Dr. Judy Rois, new executive director of the Anglican Foundation, gave an overview of the foundation's work. She said the foundation needed to dispel myths that it was an exclusive club for rich Anglicans and only funded building projects.

Ms. Rois described some of the foundation's new initiatives, including a farm at the Sorrento Centre, B.C., and the Happy Adventures of Hope Bear, a new children's book that will raise money for the Kids Helping Kids Trust.

#### **ELCIC Convention**

COGS heard a report from Cynthia Haines-Turner, COGS's representative to the National Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), full communion partners of the Anglican Church of Canada.

Ms. Haines-Turner shared highlights from ELCIC's June convention in Saskatoon, which she described as "intense" and "prayer-filled."

Among other work, the convention passed several resolutions relating to human sexuality. Delegates approved a policy statement allowing rostered ministers to preside at or bless legal marriages, including those between same-sex couples, according

to the laws of the province. They also approved a policy paving the way for the ordination and installation of gay and lesbian pastors.

The Rev. Doug Reble, ELCIC's representative on COGS, also shared insights from the meeting and current work of the full communion partners.

### **Anglican Covenant**

Bishop George Bruce, chair of the Anglican Communion Working Group (ACWG) provided an update on his group's work. He said the ACWG has fulfilled its tasks as mandated by General Synod. The group has received the Anglican Covenant and has prepared study materials, which were organized into an online resource hub last May.

Bishop Bruce encouraged COGS members to use these materials and give feedback to the ACWG. COGS will ultimately decide what resolution on the Anglican Covenant will be taken forward to General Synod 2013.

The Primate said that he was planning to do a "cross country check up" on Anglican Covenant work at next week's House of Bishops meeting.

#### **Resolution**

Council resolved to thank the ACWG and the Governance Working Group (GWG) for their work. They also requested the General Secretary to write to dioceses commending Anglican Covenant study material from the ACWG and the GWG.

### **General Synod 2013**

The Ven. Dr. Michael Thompson, General Secretary, gave an overview of the first joint Anglican-Lutheran national meeting, which will take place July 3 to 7, 2013, in Ottawa. The theme will be "Together for the Love of the World." Anglicans and Lutherans will meet together for approximately half the meeting.

Mr. Thompson encouraged COGS members to be champions of this event. He invited them to be open to how the structure will be different from previous General Synods.

COGS members asked questions about the event, including how the meeting will deal with time constraints and how youth will be involved.

*At 3:30 COGS adjourned for the day and travelled to St. Peter's Anglican Church, Erindale, for a service celebrating the ministry of the new General Secretary, Mr. Thompson.*

*The Primate presided and the Very Rev. Peter Elliott preached.*

*During the service Mr. Thompson received symbolic gifts from General Synod staff, including a pair of "flexible but firm" red "Chuck Taylor" running shoes from the treasurer.*

*After the Eucharist, members enjoyed a special dinner in St. Peter's parish hall. Many friends and family members of Mr. Thompson joined to bless him in this new stage of ministry.*



# COGS Highlights



Council of General Synod

November 20, 2011

The third day of COGS's fall 2011 meeting began with Bible study at 9:00. At 9:45, members gathered for business.

## Resources for Reconciliation

The morning began with a three-part series on resources for reconciliation. Esther Wesley, Anglican Healing Fund (AHF) coordinator, gave an overview of the program's work. AHF was started in 1991 as a way for the Anglican Church of Canada to respond to residential schools issues.

Ms. Wesley outlined problems that are common in Indigenous communities, including lateral violence, suicide, substance and alcohol abuse, lack of parenting skills, and family violence.

She celebrated, however, the healing work that the AHF has been able to accomplish by supporting conferences, resource development, children and youth programs, and more.

Ms. Wesley noted that the healing fund has supported 425 projects since 1991 but there have been some geographical gaps. Much of the funding has gone to B.C. and Ontario where there are survivors organizations.

Henriette Thompson, General Synod's coordinator for ecumenical, interfaith, and government relations then gave an update on the church's work supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Ms. Thompson worked with the theme "we are all treaty people" and shared a bit about the history of the traditional Mississauga lands where the council meets.

Ms. Thompson then invited National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald to share more about the significance of treaties. He spoke about the role that churches often played in encouraging First Nations people to sign treaties. He also said that treaties were essential because they describe the humanity of First Nations people, with rights that include culture and government.

Ms. Thompson reminded COGS that there are two TRC events coming up: a regional event in Victoria next April and a national event in Saskatoon next June. She encouraged members to support this work.

Len Fortune, a special guest to COGS, spoke to members about his book *A is for Assimilation*. Mr. Fortune, who had been equipped as an ambassador of reconciliation in the dioceses of Toronto and Niagara, wrote the book to educate Canadians about Indigenous history.

Mr. Fortune encouraged COGS members to share this project and help spread awareness about Indigenous history. "First peoples are at a tipping point," he said. "Non-Aboriginals have the opportunity to prevent them from fading into the abyss."

## The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF)

Members heard a presentation from Adele Finney, executive director of PWRDF and the Rev. David Pritchard, PWRDF vice president and member of the PWRDF board.

Ms. Finney shared outcomes from key meetings she has attended since General Synod 2010. She focused in particular on her connections with the Anglican Alliance, a new body that is coordinating development work throughout the worldwide Anglican Communion. Ms. Finney recently attended one of their four regional consultations in Hong Kong.

Ms. Finney introduced a memorandum of understanding between PWRDF and General Synod. This statement does not officially change either body's structure. Instead, it states a spirit of cooperation: "General Synod's Relationships staff and PWRDF staff will seek to act collaboratively or together in all matters except those in which we must act separately for financial, contractual or legal reasons."

Mr. Pritchard shared some updates from the PWRDF board, which had a full meeting of staff, board, diocesan representatives and youth council in November. He



noted that there is a new website coming and that they are doing work to prepare for a new work plan next spring.

Members asked questions about the presentation. A discussion emerged about whether PWRDF should emphasize its Christian identity in official documents.

*COGS members took a lunch break.*

### **PWRDF continued**

Members returned to discuss the PWRDF presentation and the memorandum of agreement.

#### **Resolution**

Council approved the memorandum of agreement between the General Synod and PWRDF.

### **Companions of the Diocese of Jerusalem**

The Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, introduced a new voluntary body called the Companions of the Diocese of Jerusalem that would support General Synod's partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

The Primate reminded COGS of General Synod's strong partnership with Jerusalem. In 2009, the Primate visited Jerusalem as a pilgrim and in 2010, the Right Rev. Suheil Dawani, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, attended the General Synod national meeting.

#### **Resolution**

Council approved the terms of reference for the Companions of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

### **Partner reflections**

The Rev. Doug Reble, partner from the ELCIC, shared a wide variety of reflections on the meeting. He encouraged COGS members to continue to embrace the Marks of Mission and to encourage stewardship in their parishes. He also reminded COGS that a "tsunami of demographic changes" would be hitting the church over the next couple of years and he encouraged them to prepare for it.

Martha Gardner, partner from the Episcopal Church (TEC) shared a variety of insights from her church that related to COGS's work. She compared COGS's yearly budgeting process to TEC's practice of setting budgets for the triennium at their national conventions.

Ms. Gardner noted that TEC prioritizes anti-racism work and that there were related activities at every meeting

of the executive council. She also reflected on the full communion partnership between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. She said this was an example to the American Episcopal and Lutheran churches.

### **Setting priorities for structure and budget decisions**

Bishop Dennis Drainville proposed a resolution, that "COGS set aside two full days to study, discuss, and set specific prioritized mission goals for the next five years and that the council establish a plan for the effective utilization of financial and staff resources in achieving those specific goals."

This resolution was suggested because although General Synod has just passed a balanced budget, it will need to make major budget and structural adjustments in the future if current trends continue.

A thorough discussion followed. Some members spoke in favour of the resolution because they wanted COGS to be ready for these major changes. Other members wondered about the logistics of accomplishing this goal at a COGS meeting and whether the House of Bishops should be involved.

After several amendments, the Primate proposed a rewrite that refocused the discussion along the lines of Vision 2019. He noted that Vision 2019 had already set priorities for such decisions. The Primate also noted that discussions were already happening around the church to improve current structures, including the agreement between PWRDF and General Synod, and work in several Indigenous area missions.

#### **Resolution**

COGS agreed to set aside two full days to consider clear directions and a plan for the efficient utilization of financial, staff, and structural resources in achieving the priorities and practices set out in Vision 2019.

### **Pension Committee**

COGS members heard a brief report from Bob Boeckner, a member of Pension Committee, a trustee, and chair of the central advisory group. COGS then passed four resolutions relating to leaves of absence and long-term disability plans.

### **French Translation**

Felix Cote-Gaudreau, COGS member, asked General Synod to translate Anglican Covenant study material—from the Anglican Communion Working Group and the Governance Working Group—into French.



### **Omnibus crime bill**

Bishop Drainville suggested a motion that challenged the Canadian parliament's action around the omnibus crime bill.

COGS members raised several points in response. Some wondered about strategies to engage the government and others noted that the church has already registered its concern through its partner, the Church Council on Justice and Corrections. Several amendments were made in response.

#### **Resolution**

COGS agreed to ask the General Secretary to write the Prime Minister of Canada in the spirit of restorative justice to give the omnibus crime bill significantly more study and debate in the Canadian parliament.

### **Key messages**

COGS members ended their meeting by naming several "headlines" that described their work. Here is a sample:

- Vision 2019 is gaining traction
- Change is coming
- Balanced budget approved
- We're creating structures for mission
- Historic joint Anglican-Lutheran meeting in 2013
- Significant progress on healing and reconciliation
- Stewardship education support available
- Church warmly welcomes new General Secretary

*At 3:00, COGS adjourned and members began their trips back home.*

