

**REPORT OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY
CONCERNING THE COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD
TO GENERAL SYNOD 2023**

Under the Constitution of the General Synod, the Council of General Synod is responsible for oversight of the finances, governance and programmes of the General Synod between meeting of the General Synod. Details of these areas of ministry will be found in the various reports to the General Synod. The theme chosen for the 2019-2022 triennium was “A changing Church, a searching world, a faithful God.” This proved prescient as the world entered the Covid 19 pandemic and as a result our triennium was changed to a quadrennium with the delay of the planned General Synod meeting to 2023.

Change was a significant theme amongst the senior leadership of the General Synod over the last four years. We began the quadrennium with a new Primate. Then with the retirement of my predecessor, Archdeacon Michael Thompson, appointed a new General Secretary. Next the Treasurer, Ms. Hanna Goschy, retired and we brought onboard Ms. Amal Attia as Treasurer. Finally, when Archbishop Mark MacDonald resigned and relinquished his ministry after an allegation of misconduct the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) had to elect a new National Indigenous Archbishop. After an extensive process of discernment by ACIP, Archbishop Chris Harper was chosen.

We also saw change in the leadership of two of our three affiliated national organizations, with the retirements of the Rev. Canon Dr. Judy Rois as Executive Director of the Anglican Foundation and of Ms. Judy Robinson as Executive Director of the Pension Office. Their successors, Dr. Scott Brubacher and Ms. Rekha Menon, respectively, have both stepped into their roles effectively.

A key theme in our life as Council of General Synod over the last four years has been the work of the Strategic Planning Working Group. Mandated by General Synod resolution A103 in 2019, the Strategic Planning Working Group (SPWG) was established by CoGS at its fall meeting in 2019 to conduct the important work of setting the course for the next several years. The pandemic required a significant shift in the planned process and, as you will read in their report, the SPWG began a process of extensive listening across the Church to discern the priorities of Anglicans from coast to coast to coast. What emerged from this process was the set of strategic aspirations which were tested and refined over the course of regular consultations with CoGS and now presented to the General Synod for adoption.

Also at its first meeting, the Council committed itself to the work of dismantling racism. In 2001 General Synod adopted a resolution to “seek ways to work toward a more balanced representation reflecting the diversity of our Church at all levels and to encourage members of under-represented and minority groups to be involved in the councils and committees of the Church.” We have made painfully little progress in this vital work, and this incarnation of CoGS made it a significant theme, committing to regular engagements with the Dismantling Racism Task Force to better understand the pernicious reality of racism in the world and in our church and to catalyze change.

The Governance Working Group, following up from resolution C005, made a series of presentations and engaged the Council in the process of constitutional review testing ideas and obtaining the Council’s direction. The Governance Working Group’s proposals are included in its report and in the resolutions before the General Synod.

CoGS welcomed Ms. Mandy Marshall, the Anglican Communion’s Director for Gender Justice, to its November 2022 meeting. Ms. Marshall led a session on Safe Church practices from a trauma-informed perspective, as part of Council’s follow-up to resolution A128 from General Synod 2019.

While CoGS was meeting in March 2020 the Covid 19 pandemic was just beginning and travel restrictions and lockdowns were about to begin. As the world transitioned to working from home and meeting on-line, so too did the Council of General Synod. Meeting by Zoom for its regular sessions of November 2020 and May 2021, the Council also took advantage of the on-line platform to hold five extra meetings for a few hours at a time, in June and July 2020, February and March 2021, and February 2022. In November 2021 CoGS was able to meet for the first time in a hybrid format, with some members gathering together in our usual venue of Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in Mississauga, Ontario, while others joined by Zoom. Hybrid meetings continued for the rest of the quadrennium, though increasing numbers of members were able to gather in person by the March 2023 meeting.

Meeting on-line or in a hybrid format required considerable extra effort from the members of the Planning and Agenda Team (co-chaired by the Rev. Cynthia Haines Turner and the Rev. Monique Stone) and from support staff, as well as a measure of good grace among the members of CoGS. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the particular efforts of support staff including Ms. Shannon Cottrell, Executive Secretary for Governance, Ms. Josie DeLucia, Executive Assistant to the General Secretary (until May 2022), Ms. Camille George Johnson, Executive Assistant to the General Secretary (since July 2022), and Mr. Brian Bukowski, Web Manager.

I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge the often heroic efforts of the whole staff of the General Synod through a period of significant change, challenge and upheaval overshadowed by the pandemic. The staff of Church House have worked tirelessly through the challenges of the last four years to continue the work of the General Synod with excellence. I am grateful to them all.

Thank you to the members of the Council of General Synod, in particular to the Prolocutor, the Rev. Dr. Karen Egan, and the Deputy Prolocutor, Ms. Judith Moses, and to the many volunteers who staff our various committees and task forces, who put in an extra year of service under such trying circumstances. And thank you as well to our many faithful and generous donors who support our work.

Throughout this quadrennium the Council of General Synod has been blessed by the leadership of our Primate, Archbishop Linda Nicholls. I am grateful for her wisdom, good grace and good humour.

Respectfully submitted,
The Ven. Alan T. Perry
General Secretary

Attachments:

Appendix A	Report of the Strategic Planning Working Group
Appendix B	Statistics Report