

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



***We envision a church growing
in membership, faith
and service in God's world***

**Saturday, May 9, 2009
Queen of Apostles, Mississauga, Ont.**

Council members began the second day of their spring meeting with an 8:45 Eucharist, celebrated by the Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry. Members then met in their Bible study groups from 9:30 to 10:30.

Preliminaries

Council reconvened at 10:45 for the orders of the day. Sue Winn delivered announcements, and updated COGS on the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Jamaica.

Election of deputy prolocutor

Bishop Coffin presented the results of the fifth ballot and the sixth ballots were distributed.

Presentation of No Debate List

The Ven. Huskins presented the No Debate List for COGS members to later vote on.

Human sexuality II

Continuing from yesterday's evening session, COGS members continued to discern what steps to take from the General Synod 2007's assignments to the church around the issue of sexuality. Members had been asked to read FWMC's Rothesay Report, which addressed one of these assignments: developing a theological rationale for same-sex marriage.

Janet Marshall, chair of the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee (FWMC) introduced several questions for COGS members to discuss in their table groups. Members were asked to: share reactions to the Rothesay Report, comment on whether it was an adequate response to General Synod 2007's assignment, and state how they saw this work helping or impeding discernment on human sexuality at General Synod 2010.

Members discussed the questions in their table groups, then representatives shared their varied responses. Some COGS members supported FWMC's theological work, while others commented on the report's incompleteness as only explaining one side of the rationale. Some wondered about why and how the church was pursuing questions around both "the blessing of same-sex unions" and "the marriage of same-sex couples." Other members said they felt the Rothesay Report was the best possible outcome from a fraught and vague request from General Synod.

At 11:45 Council members said midday prayers then took a lunch break. They reconvened at 2:00

Election of deputy prolocutor

Bishop Percy Coffin announced that the Ven. Harry Huskins had been elected deputy prolocutor.

***Resolution**

The Council agreed by consensus to destroy the ballots from the deputy prolocutor elections.

No Debate List

After removing one motion from the No Debate List (at the request of Bishop Michael Hawkins) Archdeacon Huskins led the council through these motions, without debate:

***Resolution**

Council decided by consensus to thank FWMC for its work.

***Resolution**

Council decided by consensus to receive the response of the Joint Anglican-Lutheran Commission to the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order paper "The Nature and Mission of the Church" and adopt it as the response of the Anglican Church of Canada.

***Resolution**

Council decided by consensus to authorize the propers for the National Aboriginal Day of Prayer for use where permitted by the Ordinary, for trial use and evaluation, until the meeting of General Synod 2010.

Human sexuality II (continued)

Ms. Marshall returned to the microphone to continue leading the discussions on human sexuality.

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She asked COGS members to discuss this question in their table groups: “Should the question of changing the marriage canon come to General Synod 2010 for decision?” If their answer was “yes,” members were encouraged to think of what resources and work (in addition to the Rothesay Report) were needed and how they would be coordinated. If members decided “no” they should consider what General Synod 2010 would need to do to further conversations on human sexuality.

Again, COGS members offered varied responses. Many were reluctant to bring forward a proposal about the revision of the marriage canon, and others commented that the church should concentrate on the issue of “blessing same-sex unions” as this was the concept considered earlier.

Ms. Marshall suggested that a small group of COGS members consider the next step for the conversations. The Primate, Archbishop Hiltz, further suggested that Bishop Colin Johnson, Lela Zimmer, and the Rev. John Steele form this group. The Primate reminded COGS that it was their responsibility to chart the path for discussions on human sexuality up to General Synod 2010.

Task Force on Role of the Primate

Bishop Michael Ingham, chair of the task force, explained the mandate of his group: to review Canon 3 on the primacy and to recommend changes, if any, to General Synod 2010.

As part of this work, the task force interviewed the current Primate as well as the previous two: Archbishop Hutchison and Archbishop Peers. They also reviewed over 1,000 pages of archival materials on primacy. Bishop Ingham noted some interesting findings, including that out of 12 completed primacies in Canada, 6 primates have died in office (Archbishop Hiltz crossed himself). Bishop Ingham also noted that the Canadian Anglican church seems interested in reviewing the role of the Primate every 10-20 years.

From their research, the task force is learning that it has been helpful for the primate not to be attached to a specific diocese. However, some limitations of the current configuration are that the primate has no liturgical or sacramental authority in a diocese, unless invited by the diocesan bishop.

Moving forward, the Task Force is also reviewing secular models of leadership, forming questions to take to provincial synods, and consulting with the

governance working group to prepare to draft canonical changes, if necessary.

Operations review

Consultant Jennifer Clarke shared information about the operations review of General Synod, which COGS members approved at their November meeting.

Ms. Clarke has been learning about Church House, (an admittedly “complicated organization” she said) by reading documents (like previous strategic plans), working with Management Team, and interviewing Church House staff.

After describing priorities and benefits for her review, Ms. Clarke presented her recommendations:

- *That the General Secretary be confirmed as the Chief Operating Officer of the national staff at Church House

- *That an integrated operational planning process be initiated for Church House under the leadership of the General Secretary

- *That decisions concerning Church House infrastructure and support reside with the General Secretary

Some time was then spent discussing how operational and strategic decisions would be made for General Synod. As has been the case up to now, operational concerns will reside with Church House, whereas COGS deals with strategic decisions.

Ms. Clarke ended by saying that the next steps in her work is to assemble working groups that would work on tasks like trimming costs and improving communication.

Governance Working Group

Dr. Randall Fairey and the Ven. Harry Huskins gave an update on the work of this task force.

Mr. Fairey spoke about the development of a national Indigenous entity. At the last COGS meeting, it seemed that various Indigenous area ministries would eventually form an ecclesiastical province. However, after more consultations with communities it has become clear that other groups wish to pursue other models and that the task force is still in “an information-gathering stage.” They

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were able to share that task force members had been invited to Sacred Circle this summer.

Archdeacon Huskins spoke about their work reviewing the composition of General Synod and COGS. They are working to make these bodies more efficient in terms of membership, size and how they are elected. They will have a more specific recommendations at the next meeting of COGS.

Anglican-United Dialogue

COGS returned to discuss the one resolution that had been taken off the No Debate List. It related to the St. Brigid's Report, which detailed the past six years of dialogue between the Anglican Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada. The Rev. Canon Alyson Barnett-Cowan, director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry gave a brief background of the report.

***Resolution**

Council agreed by consensus to commend the St. Brigid's Report to dioceses for review and comment.

At 5:00 Council adjourned for dinner, and returned at 7:00.

Update on the Communion panel and discussion

COGS members watched three presentations that related to relationships within the Anglican Communion.

The Primates' Meeting

The Primate spoke about the Primates' Meeting he attended in Alexandria, Egypt, in February 2009. He characterized the meeting as "open, frank, and gracious."

He updated Council on what he learned about relations within the Anglican Communion, including the primates' continued support for an Anglican Covenant.

The Primate also reported on a number of challenging conversations, including his unanswered request to primates involved with the Global Anglicanism Future Conference (GAFCON) that they reveal more about their plans for a conservative province. He also tried in vain to organize a conversation between those affected by the cross-border interventions of the bishop of the Southern Cone (including this bishop).

He updated the Council on the Anglican Communion's six appointed pastoral visitors, who will visit parts of the communion struggling with tension over issues of sexuality. The Archbishop of Canterbury asked the Primate to invite these visitors to the House of Bishops, and after consultation with this House, the Primate has done so.

Finally, the Primate said that it was satisfying for him to say at this meeting that after the Egypt meeting he was visiting partners (and primates) in Kenya and Burundi. He noted that it showed the other mission issues that the Anglican Church of Canada is engaged in.

Mission and Mutual Responsibility Conference

Henriette Thompson, director of Partnerships, spoke about the Anglican Churches in the Americas Conference on Mutual Responsibility and Mission that she attended in San José, Costa Rica, last February.

She organized her presentation according to the Five Marks of Mission, beginning with "proclaiming the good news of the kingdom." Ms. Thompson noted that in their Bible studies this conference addressed the links between adoration, proclamation, and action.

For the mark on "teaching, baptizing, and nurturing new believers" she spoke about Barrio Cuba, a preschool supported by the Episcopal Church of Cuba.

On the topic of "responding to human need by loving service," Ms. Thompson shared specifics of Canadian partnerships with Latin America, including companion diocese relations, as exist between the dioceses of Niagara and Peru, for example. She also listed the Latin American partnerships that the Anglican Church of Canada maintains through organizations like the South American Mission Society.

For the mark of "seeking to transform unjust structures of society," Ms. Thompson spoke about a Uruguayan man, Enrique Espinosa Bentancor, who struggled through a difficult period of oppression to continue witnessing for God's justice in his country.

Because of time constraints, Ms. Thompson ended her presentation at this point, but she noted that the conference promoted the idea of a sixth mark of

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mission, which would focus on peace-building and conflict transformation.

Anglican Covenant

Bishop Colin Johnson outlined the process and content of the Anglican Communion Covenant (now called this instead of “the Anglican Covenant”). He noted that the Covenant Design Group had worked with “phenomenal speed” and produced three drafts of the covenant.

He described the four sections of the covenant, and noted that the Anglican Consultative Council has suggested that a small group work on the challenging elements of the fourth section.

Bishop Johnson described Canadian responses to the covenant, and then outlined in detail many of the changes to the most recent draft (the Ridley-Cambridge draft), including the explicit reference to the Five Marks of Mission.

Windsor Continuation Group Report

Bishop Johnson then turned to address the Windsor Continuation Group, which was established by the Archbishop of Canterbury with the mandate to address outstanding questions from the Windsor Report.

He provided details on the December 2008 report, which covered topics including the tension that exists in Anglican churches between local autonomy and global communion. It also underlined the seriousness of the present crisis and strongly affirmed the listening process.

Gladys Cook

The evening session ended on a sad note as Bishop Tom Morgan, chaplain to COGS, announced the death of Gladys Cook, a much-beloved member of the Anglican Church of Canada and the subject of the film *Topahdewin: the Gladys Cook Story*.

At 8:45 COGS members met for night prayers, then session adjourned for the evening.