

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



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

**Sunday, May 10, 2009
Queen of Apostles, Mississauga, Ont.**

The third day of the Council's spring meeting began with Bible study at 9:00.

Orders of the Day

At 9:45, Sue Winn reviewed the daily schedule and presented updates from the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Jamaica.

Human sexuality III

A small group worked last night to summarize COGS's response to the work that the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee (FWMC) has done on the issues of sexuality since General Synod 2007. Lela Zimmer presented a draft summary document, which covered the conversations on sexuality yesterday and suggested recommendations to bring to General Synod 2010.

In plenary, COGS members worked through each of the document's five sections individually. They made changes to each section, then agreed to the changes by consensus.

The final document was called "A Word to the Church on Questions of Human Sexuality from the Council of General Synod Meeting, May 2009."

The document opened with this statement: "COGS considered the work that has been done in fulfillment of the resolutions of General Synod 2007 regarding sexuality and reached consensus that this is not the time to ask General Synod to amend the marriage canon to allow for the marriage of same-sex couples."

The statement also recommended that the church do further work on several topics, including "any distinction between a blessing and a nuptial blessing" and "any distinctions among marriage,

the blessing of a civil marriage, and the blessing of a union."

Among other things, the statement also commended the related work of FWMC and the Primate's Theological Commission (PTC), and recommended that a listening process regarding sexuality be built into the agenda for General Synod 2010.

COGS members will take the complete statement back to their dioceses. It will also be available in the full COGS minutes.

General Synod 2010

Barbara Burrows, chair of the General Synod 2010 planning committee, gave a quick update on her group's work. She said the General Synod website is up and running and the committee has chosen an official travel agent. They are so far on budget and are working to use less paper at General Synod. A barebones agenda for the 2010 meeting is emerging, and includes some exciting worship plans.

Council of the North

Archbishop Caleb Lawrence reported on what the Council of the North plans to do with the funds raised from the Amazing Grace Project. The project encouraged all Canadian Anglican parishes to sing "Amazing Grace" on Nov. 23, and donate a toonie to the Council of the North. An estimated one half of Canadian Anglican parishes participated, and over \$91,000 has thus far been raised.

The Council of the North has decided to spend the money on hiring a staff resource person to work on suicide prevention for three years. Archbishop Lawrence said that suicide "is an epidemic in all Council of the North dioceses" and that the dioceses are "woefully inadequate in their inability to cope."

Anti-Racism Training

The Primate said that he and the General Secretary had decided that resolutions brought to COGS about anti-racism training be brought to the November meeting for adequate discussion and decisions.

Partners' Reflections

Dorothy Davies-Flindall reported on her experiences as the Canadian Anglican representative on the Executive Council of the

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

Episcopal Church (TEC). The council met most recently in Stockton, California, in January 2009. Ms. Davies-Flindall noted several details of the meeting, including the fact that the council operates bilingually, with translation into Spanish. She also noted that the council has a brief anti-racism session at each meeting, and that she heard an inspiring presentation by the director of Episcopal Relief and Development on their anti-malaria “nets for life” campaign.

At noon Council took a lunch break, and reconvened at 1:15.

Partners’ Reflections continued

Judy Kochendorfer, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) representative to COGS, delivered two reports. She first spoke on behalf of Bishop Colin Johnson, the Canadian Anglican representative to the ELCIC national church council, who had to leave the COGS meeting early.

Bishop Johnson’s reflections noted that the ELCIC meeting now includes a “dwelling in the word” section where council members share how scripture has been important in their lives. He also noted that the council is considering much restructuring within the church. They are examining synods, bishops, convention membership, and seminaries, to see what, if anything, should be trimmed or reorganized.

Ms. Kochendorfer then turned to her own report. She thanked COGS for welcoming her again and said “I know that your life in the church is very important to you—this is evident in your meetings.” She also asked for prayers for ELCIC’s national convention, coming up at the end of June, and expressed excitement about the joint national meetings of ELCIC and the Anglican Church of Canada in 2013.

This May meeting is Ms. Kochendorfer’s last as ELCIC partner. The prolocutor offered her a thank-you gift, and COGS applauded in appreciation.

Key messages

Sue Winn led COGS in final reflections on key messages, with the help of Dion Lewis and Dorothy Davies-Flindall writing on the flip-charts.

Some of the key messages were:

-COGS was grounded in Eucharist and Bible study, which were prepared by Latin American partners.

-COGS was appreciative of FWMC and PTC in helping them address issues around sexuality

-COGS members give grateful thanks for the life of Gladys Cook.

-COGS members met the new treasurer Michèle George and heard financial reports.

-COGS commended the final report of Anglican-United churches’ dialogue (the St. Brigid’s Report) to dioceses for review and study.

-COGS welcomed the new prolocutor, Canon Robert Falby, and elected a new deputy prolocutor, Archdeacon Harry Huskins.

-COGS thanked the Primate for his gracious leadership and composure around difficult issues.

-COGS prepared a document called “A Word to the Church on Questions of Human Sexuality, from the Council of General Synod meeting, May 2009.”

At 1:45, COGS ended with a Eucharist, celebrated by the Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz.