



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

**Fall, 2004, Mississauga, Ont.
(Queen of Apostles)**

Friday, November 26

This is the first fall meeting of this Council of General Synod this triennium. Members gathered in the chapel for Bible study, worship and community building.

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CoGS gathered in plenary at 10:40.

The Primate welcomed members and explained that much of this session would be “orientation.” There are two new members since CoGS was elected in June. He introduced observers from ACIP, PWRDF and ELCIC. The ECUSA partner is unable to attend. Dr. Mwita Akiri, provincial secretary from Tanzania is attending as a partner..

The minutes for meetings in March and June, 2004, with corrections, were approved.

Marilyn Dean and Caleb Lawrence reviewed the agenda. Caleb explained that the agenda is specifically designed for a new group coming together as a new community. “Let’s relax a little bit and let’s talk and get to know each other.” Today, he said, is largely community building; then CoGS will deal with reports. The bulk of important material with resolutions will come to us towards the end of the meeting. Marilyn ex-

plained the different broad areas that will come before CoGS.

Primate’s Reflections

Archbishop Andrew Hutchison noted that the opening line to his job description is to be a pastor to the whole church. He is now six months into the job and it has been a steep learning curve.

We have been through some fascinating years. He reflected on previous primates and the contributions they brought to the church. Among them, he noted that the primacy of Ted Scott was dedicated to “serving the world”. The primacy of Michael Peers was marked by turbulent years around the issue of residential schools.

He noted that he has just turned 66, so that this primacy is likely to be quite short. He said that reconciliation has been a theme throughout his ministry since ordination. Another concern has been to look to people at the margins and people who are excluded. We have been through a very fractious time in the life of the church. Reconciliation would be an important gift for the church. There are all kinds of disconnects, for instance between the life of the church and young people. There is a disconnect between ourselves and the media with too little understanding of what a powerful instrument the media can be for the church. There needs to be some bridge building between the church and those in positions of national leadership. We must reestablish a rapport with those who direct the affairs of the nation. “I ache over the indigenous problems in the country. In my travels in the past several months I have heard from native peoples stories of drugs, suicide and depression despite billions of dollars dumped into a basket called native affairs. And yet nothing much seems to have improved. That breaks my heart. I don’t know how to address this, but I know we need to move forward.”

There is a disconnect between the General Synod and the national church on the ground, the local folks. In 1995 the church decided to leave to the local church much of the work that did not have to be done nationally. Then when we embarked in a process of intentional listening we learned that many people did not know what General Synod is. We devised a new *Framework for Mission and Ministry*, which is a huge challenge for this council. The plan has been adopted and what has been adopted in the core ministry dropped in 1995. The challenge is that there is no more money for these ministries.

A great deal of the conflict in the world and in the church has to do with people being left out of the conversation. Things are done that affect people and many feel they were not consulted. A great deal of the difficulties the Communion is in is a reaction to the colonial years. Decisions are now made in North America and the Global South says it will no longer stand for decisions made elsewhere that affect them.

I introduced myself to the Archbishop of Canterbury early on in my primacy to begin a conversation. I wrote the other 37 primates to tell them who I am. I have spent some time with the Presiding Bishop of ECUSA where we initiated a new partnership at the level of the House of Bishops.

Being concerned with communications, I have tried to be present throughout the church as I could. I have initiated a webcast called *Conversations with the Primate*. There has been a wonderful response throughout the country from people who have felt included in a new way through the webcasts. That above all is what I am aiming for is to try and draw people into the conversation and into the life of the church.

The House of Bishops has been a very fractious place to be in the past few years; it has not been a pleasant place to be and this has had an impact on the life of the church. I

want you to know that at the last meeting there was a sea change and we found ourselves passing unanimous motions and laughing with each other.

That is what the Windsor Report is all about: finding some breathing room and trying to accommodate each other despite diversity. The fact that the Windsor Report was unanimous is extremely encouraging.

There have been many prophets of doom and gloom in the past years. Well, a study by the treasurer has shown that in the past five years – turbulent years – diocesan income stayed level. That is extraordinary and speaks of tremendous good will and determination to get on with the work of the church. We are not down the tubes. We are poised, psychologically, spiritually and in terms of our resources, for some very good things to happen. I rejoice to be here and to share in these experiences.

Members of the council talked in their table groups about the Primate's reflections.

Larry Beardy affirmed what the Primate said about indigenous people.

There was support for the Primate's initiatives with media, nationally and internationally and with the work he wishes to do with youth. (The Primate mentioned the establishment of a Primate's Youth Network.)

There was some concern about the Primate "burning himself out." Andrew responded that the first six months, with new committees and boards, are probably the worse.

There was support for the idea of sharing information on national leaders who are Anglicans, including Cabinet ministers.

Announcements

The Primate noted that CoGS member Bishop Caleb Lawrence has been elected Metropolitan of Ontario. Alyson Barnett-Cowan thanked people for their prayers and support during recent health problems.

Council adjourned for lunch at 12 p.m.

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Afternoon

Council reconvened at 2 p.m.

Council moved *in camera* to hear from the Primate a nomination for the position of Treasurer. Council reconvened. Peter Blachford has been confirmed as Treasurer of General Synod.

Peter Irish, on behalf of the Nominations Committee, called for a number of nominations to committees and organizations. He explained the process for nominations and elections.

Council engaged in more community building.

Dorothy Davies-Flindall gave a presentation on listening and speaking -- participating in the deliberations of council.

Jim Boyles spoke about the role of staff at council and more generally in terms of their work with committees. He introduced staff present at the meeting and explained their various roles.

Helen-Rose Houldcroft explained what “members’ concerns” are and how they may be used to share concerns with others or as a way to bring questions and issues to the floor.

Allen Box invited a discussion in table groups on the topic “what kind of church do you want this church to be?”

Members of table groups reported on how they answered the question: a church with room for everyone; a vibrant church; a church inspired by faith; a church whose members listen to each other; a church open to truth and open to working with other faiths; an inclusive church; a church that in-

cludes children; a church for the community; an “unconflicted utopian” church; a church that is a voice for justice; our needs should not come first; a strong church in local mission that takes the best it has and offers it to the whole world; a church with local leadership; a church where people can express their beliefs; a welcoming church; a church that nurtures and celebrates and includes all cultures.

The report of the General Secretary:

Jim Boyles presented his report, which includes 11 motions.

Council approved the appointment of Jim Boyles, Dorothy Davies-Flindall and John Steele to the governing board of the Canadian Council of Churches;

Council approved a motion that General Synod’s guidelines on sexual abuse and harassment be reviewed by the Handbook Concerns Committee, the General Secretary and the Human Resources Coordinator.

Council passed a motion approving the membership of the Mennonite Church Canada to the Canadian Council of Churches.

A proposal by the diocese of Rupert’s Land to amend the rules and procedures of General Synod be referred to the Handbook Concerns Committee;

Council defeated a motion inviting Metropolitans to attend meetings of CoGS, noting that the meetings are open and that anyone who wishes may, in fact, attend.

Break

Dean Peter Elliott, the Prolocutor, introduced a discussion of the *Framework* and *Letting Down The Nets* with a description of the two documents’ background and history. Members watched a video on the *Framework*.

Council members Susan Winn and John Steele offered personal reflections on the *Framework*.

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (CoGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

Ellie Johnson, director of Partnerships, introduced Dr. Mwita Akiri, provincial secretary of the Anglican Church in Tanzania, who is with the council as a partner.

Dr. Akiri reflected: He brought greetings from the church in Tanzania; he described his country and the make-up of the church there. He said the purpose of his visit is to strengthen the partnership between the Canadian and Tanzanian Anglican churches. He expressed Tanzanian solidarity with the Canadian church, which, he said, has experienced difficulty in recent years. He described his church as a growing church and spoke about some of the challenges it faces. He described some of the church's work in attempting to fund a university and in the area of health care, principally fighting malaria and HIV/AIDS. He said the church values support from the Canadian church; he described other partners the church maintains relationships with.

Council adjourned for dinner at 5 p.m.

At dinner, council honored Jim Cullen, retired Treasurer of General Synod, and Andrew Ignatieff, retiring executive director of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund.

Council adjourned at 8 p.m.