

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



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

**Friday, March 12, 2010
Queen of Apostles, Mississauga, Ont.**

Council members began the day with Eucharist at 8:45, then spent time in Bible study groups. At 10:30 they met for their morning session.

Budget Development

The Primate reminded COGS that budgeting for 2011 is already underway. He invited council members to discuss general budgeting principles they could commend to Management Team in this ongoing process. Among many other comments, council members noted the need to connect budgeting to the Vision 2019 plan. Others emphasized that General Synod should work to stay on track to achieve a no-deficit budget by 2012.

Faith, Worship, and Ministry

Janet Marshall, chair of the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee (FWMC), updated COGS on the recent FWMC work.

Ms. Marshall distributed a draft of theological work that members of FWMC and the Primate's Theological Commission had produced on the following topics, as assigned to them by Council in May 2009: distinctions between a blessing of a union and a nuptial blessing; distinctions among marriage, the blessing of a civil marriage, and the blessing of a union; the theological significance of blessing the civil marriage of same-sex couples.

Ms. Marshall emphasized that this document was very preliminary and COGS had to decide which elements would be most useful to bring to General Synod.

12:00 After midday prayers, Council adjourned for lunch. Council members met again at 1:30

Process for General Synod to Discuss Human Sexuality

Ms. Marshall gave a brief history of FWMC's work on human sexuality this past triennium. She reminded COGS that they had already stated their preference for a dialogue-focused General Synod that upheld the value of local, national, and international relationships.

Ms. Marshall then walked COGS through FWMC's proposed process for discussing issues of human sexuality at General Synod. In the proposed format, General Synod would begin by "faithful reporting" of FWMC's work in plenary, then break out into smaller discussion groups. Feedback from these groups would be collated and shared in plenary. The smaller groups would meet again for the same process of synthesis and shared plenary feedback. Finally a resolution would be shaped out of this feedback, and General Synod would vote on it.

COGS members discussed the proposed process. Some responded very positively. Others asked for clarification on who would draft the final resolution and whether there would be enough time for this process on the General Synod agenda.

One council member proposed that a motion—affirming the local option for dioceses to approve same-sex blessings—be brought to General Synod. COGS discussed this motion, but ultimately decided not to forward it to General Synod.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved by consensus to approve FWMC's proposed format for conversations about human sexuality at General Synod.

Anglican Communion Covenant

The Rev. Dr. Katherine Grieb gave a short presentation on the history of the Anglican Covenant, a proposed document that, if adopted, will define relationships between provinces of the Anglican Communion. The Rev. Grieb is from the Episcopal Church (TEC) and an original member of the Covenant Design Group.

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The Rev. Grieb noted that no provinces have yet ratified this Covenant. She said that from TEC’s perspective the document has progressed from being very rough to being a draft “that they could live with.”

The Rev. Dr. Eileen Scully, interim director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry, and a member of the Covenant Design Group, described the major changes to the most recent draft of the Covenant. The most contentious section has been section four, “Our Covenanted Life Together.” One of the most major changes to this section is that these covenanted relationships will be maintained by the Anglican Communion Standing Committee, which is responsible to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primate’s Meeting.

COGS members raised a variety of questions about the Covenant. Some asked whether elements of section four could be used to take punitive action against the Anglican Church of Canada. The Rev. Grieb clarified that the Covenant would not be retroactive and is intended as a “new start” within the Communion.

From 3:15 to 3:30 Council took a coffee break.

Covenant discussion continued

The Ven. Harry Huskins guided COGS through the various ways they could present the Anglican Covenant to General Synod. Delegates raised more questions about the Covenant, including how it defined “controversial action” within provinces.

***Resolution**

COGS decided by consensus to present the Anglican Communion Covenant to General Synod, as recommended in a motion from the House of Bishops.

COGS also noted that FWMC was also sending a resolution to General Synod on this subject.

The chancellor, Ron Stevenson, briefed COGS on the various ways that the Covenant could be formally accepted into Anglican polity. Dr. Scully also briefed COGS on plans for a study process to engage Canadian Anglicans in studying the Covenant.

Pension Committee

Laura Solomonian, member of board of trustees, introduced a motion from the Pension Committee.

***Resolution**

COGS voted to allow the Anglican Church of Canada Pension Plan to extend coverage of the lay plan to part-time employees of a participating employer who had just entered into a collective agreement.

Report from meeting of Canadian-African bishops

Bishop Colin Johnson (Toronto) and Michael Ingham (New Westminster) reported on face-to-face dialogue they attended along with other Canadian and African bishops in London, England, Feb. 24 to 26. This dialogue was facilitated by the Rev. Dr. Isaac Kawuki Mukasa, General Synod’s coordinator for dialogue, who for several years worked to organize theological exchange between Canada and Africa on issues of sexuality.

Both bishops reported positively on the event and noted “many moments of illumination.” Bishop Ingham shared how one African bishop said he now understood that the Anglican Church of Canada’s sensitivity to marginalized peoples was a result of the church’s history with residential schools.

Resolutions

The Ven. Harry Huskins presented the No Debate List and several other motions which he gathered into an omnibus motion.

***Resolution**

By consensus, COGS passed an omnibus motion that included procedures for election of prolocutor and deputy prolocutor; guidelines for the resolutions committee; the No Debate List, and several appointments to General Synod 2010 sessional committees.

Vision 2019 update

Dean Peter Elliott, chair of the Vision 2019 Strategic Planning Task Force, updated the Council on the ongoing work to the committee’s final report. He noted that the Primate had asked three people present at COGS—Donna Bomberry, Dr. Lela Zimmer, and Bishop Jane Alexander, to work on

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organizing the changes that COGS suggested for the report yesterday. They had produced a document of proposed changes, which had been distributed to COGS members.

From 5:00 to 7:00, Council members attended social time and dinner.

Primacy Task Force

Norah Bolton and Bishop Michael Ingham presented the work of the Primacy Task Force, which was charged with reviewing Canon 3 on the role of the Primate. In their research they not only examined the Primate's historical role but also canons in other provinces and leadership organizations in the wider world.

Bishop Ingham guided the Council through proposed changes to Canon 3. These included a definition of the Primate's title "senior metropolitan," a new section on the sacramental ministry of the primate, and an emphasis on the Primate's prophetic role.

Vision 2019

Dean Elliott reviewed the proposed changes to the Vision 2019 report, based on COGS's earlier suggestions.

Among many other changes, he revised report would have two sections. The first part would invite the church to take on the Marks of Mission as an inspiration for ministry, and the second part would explain how this work can be accomplished by the national church. The theological background of the report would also be refined to include Indigenous perspectives and the term "strategic plan" would be clearly defined. Council will have an opportunity to comment on these changes tomorrow.

Resolutions

***Resolution**

COGS voted to adopt the *Procedures for the Election of the Council of General Synod for use at the 2010 General Synod*.

***Resolution**

COGS voted to approve the revised terms of reference for the Planning and Agenda Team.

***Resolution**

COGS voted to approve seven resolutions that recommended General Synod change several

elements of the constitution. (These related to changes in committee structures and other issues).

After discussion about the Full Communion relationship to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and other ecumenical partners, COGS decided by consensus not to approve a motion that would rescind the earlier decision to propose canonical changes necessary to allow full voting participation in the Council by the ELCIC partner. This means that General Synod will consider whether ELCIC partners can vote at COGS.

COGS Evaluation

Suzanne Lawson, chair of the Planning and Agenda Team, introduced the COGS meeting evaluation that members are encouraged to fill out.

8:50 Council ended the second day of their meeting with night prayer, then adjourned for the evening.