

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



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

**November 14, 2009
Queen of Apostles, Mississauga, Ont.**

At 7:30, COGS members participated in a Eucharist. After breakfast and Bible study, they met for business at 9:45.

Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples

The Ven. Sidney Black, co-chair of the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, began a presentation on the August 2009 Sacred Circle, the triennial national gathering of Anglican Indigenous Peoples. He said the experience of moving towards self-determination was like a recent climb he took up Crow's Nest mountain in Alberta.

Freda Lepine updated COGS on a proposed area mission in northern Manitoba. She said this work was a "response to Christ's call." She also outlined proposed new structures for the mission and noted that healing prayers are an important part of all consultations.

The Ven. Larry Beardy reflected on his experience of Sacred Circle. He said he was encouraged by the support of the bishops as well as a Malcolm Naea Chun (outgoing secretary general for the Anglican Indigenous Network). Mr. Chun urged the Sacred Circle to move into the promised land of with "love and self-discipline" that they have learned in the wilderness. Henriette Thompson, director of Partnerships, also shared that Sacred Circle was a living reflection on Biblical themes of exile, homecoming, and jubilee.

National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald highlighted that this work in Indigenous Ministries is a spiritual movement, where Indigenous People are having very real,

unfiltered encounters with Jesus through the gospel. He noted that the structural proposals coming later from the Governance Working Group should be seen in this light.

At 10:30 Council took a brief coffee break and reconvened at 10:45.

Covenant Discussion

Dr. Eileen Scully, interim director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry and member of the Covenant Design Group, updated COGS on the development of the Anglican Communion Covenant. This document, if adopted, would define relationships between provinces of the Anglican Communion.

Ms. Scully noted that the first three sections of the covenant have been heavily revised, based on feedback from the provinces. Ms. Scully noted that the fourth section, "Our Covenanted Life Together" is the most challenging. It describes how the covenant would be adopted, implemented, and amended in provinces and how disputes would be resolved within the Communion.

COGS members then responded to the covenant. Some said they were concerned with the punitive nature of section four, and others noted that information about the covenant needs to be shared more widely with other Canadian Anglican communities.

Sexuality report back

Janet Marshall, chair of the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee, shared COGS members' suggestions for how to address sexuality issues at General Synod 2010. Last night members had considered four options for engagement at General Synod:

1. Delegates participate in business as usual (resolutions and debate).
2. Delegates participate in indaba-style discernment groups with no resolutions.
3. Delegates examine draft resolutions in indaba-style discernment groups.
4. Delegates develop draft resolutions in indaba-style discernment groups.

Ms. Marshall shared the wide range of responses to this question. She also reported on other feedback: some members noted the

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need for adequate time to discuss sexuality at General Synod, while others emphasized that this is still a sensitive subject and many delegates will arrive with predetermined strong agendas.

Pensions Committee

Laura Solomonian and Bishop Philip Poole, members of the Pensions Committee, presented an actuarial valuation of the General Synod Pension Plan (GSPP), conducted August 2008 by Eckler Ltd.

***Resolution**

COGS resolved to approve the following changes to the contribution and accrual rates in order to eliminate expected future losses for current active members as a result of the aging population in the GSPP:

Total pension contributions for the GSPP be increased by 2.4% on a phased-in basis: from 14.4% to 15.6% on January 1, 2010, and from 15.6% to 16.8% on January 1, 2011;

The above increase to be borne by the participating employers in two stages: from the current 10% to 11.2% on January 1, 2010, and from 11.2% to 12.4% on January 1, 2011 and

The pension accrual rate for the active members of the GSPP be dropped from the current 2% to 1.8% on January 1, 2010

***Resolutions**

COGS approved two resolutions that amended regulations and canons. These were necessary to implement changes to the contribution and accrual rates.

Bishop Poole noted that a more detailed communication about these changes will be sent soon to plan members.

Vision 2019

The Ven. Michael Pollesel, general secretary, began a presentation on Vision 2019, the church's strategic planning process. He started by leading COGS in singing the first verse of the hymn, "When Long Before Time." He noted that it is the job of every generation to discern what God's dream is for the church, and Vision 2019 is the current vehicle for discerning this dream.

Archdeacon Pollesel reviewed the church's history of strategic planning and explained that Vision 2019 gathered not only quantitative data but also qualitative information, as people responded to the two-part question, "Where is your church now, and where do you think the Anglican Church of Canada to be in 2019?" Canadian Anglicans were encouraged to respond by email, video, voice mail, and letter.

Consultant Marleen Morris explained that she and her team tagged these diverse inputs in a program called NVivo 8. They examined the data to see where the Marks of Mission appeared. They also looked for ideas that emerged organically, and found the following themes:

1. Young people and young families
2. Inclusiveness in the church
3. Return to historical teachings and practices in the church
4. Worship
5. Outreach to the local community
6. New energy and ideas
7. Growth and decline in the church
8. Handling differences in the church

Ms. Morris explained that she observed three clusters that emerged from this data. Cluster one focused on an inclusive and diverse church, cluster two focused on mission and service, and cluster three focused on the church returning to its traditional practices.

Several COGS members asked questions about the qualitative analysis, including, "how do you deal with the paradoxes in the data?"

Archdeacon Pollesel then described the work of the Vision 2019 Task Force in moving forward with this data. He presented the distillation of their work, four proposed strategic directions (further divided into 19 action areas):

- A welcoming, diverse, and inclusive church
- A church engaged in mission
- A church that reclaims the depth and breadth of Anglicanism
- A church with the organizational capacity to be faithful and effective

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COGS members reflected on the draft report both individually and in their table groups. Some shared their concerns that the document had no cohesive theology and lacks "pop." Others said the document was "on the right track."

Archdeacon Pollesel said that the next step in the Vision 2019 process was to interview stakeholders—from Management Team to the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund, then to synthesize these responses.

Anglican Journal

After a coffee break, COGS met again, only to adjourn and reconvene as the corporation of the *Anglican Journal*.

Bishop George Elliot, chair of the *Anglican Journal* board discussed aspects of the newspaper's 2010 budget and told the council that the Journal Board is currently reviewing the newspaper's governance as an independent corporation.

COGS adjourned as the *Anglican Journal* corporation and reconvened as COGS.

COGS moved to a discussion of the budget details. Members asked questions on topics ranging from staff cuts to the process between Vision 2019 and implementing these priorities at General Synod.

***Resolution**

COGS unanimously resolved to approve the General Synod Budget 2010 for Core Operations with a budgeted deficit of \$492,000.

From 5:00 to 7:00 COGS members took a break for social time and dinner.

Governance Working Group (GWG)

Randall Fairey and David Jones presented the final report of the GWG. They have concentrated on four files:

- Resolutions dealing with the overlap between the Declaration of Principles and the Constitution, as well as amending formulas

- Resolutions dealing with the structure of the church
- The structure of the national Indigenous ministry
- The size and composition of General Synod and the Council of General Synod

Relating to the first file, Mr. Jones presented several "housekeeping" resolutions for COGS to recommend to General Synod 2010. These included changing the Declaration of Principles so that laity, clergy, and bishops would sit and vote together at General Synod.

On the second file, the GWG considered changing the amending formulas so that, among other things, it would be possible to amend canons dealing with discipline and worship over one General Synod rather than two. Their consultations revealed that they should not proceed with this change.

For the third file, GWG considered the structure of the national church, provinces, and dioceses. They consulted widely on this subject, including an extensive discussion with the House of Bishops, but they found "no common thread." GWG recommended a resolution that General Synod 2010 affirm more conversation on this topic.

On the national Indigenous ministry file, GWG proposed a resolution that would give canonical recognition for the roles of the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and Sacred Circle.

On the final file, GWG presented three resolutions for consideration at General Synod 2010. The first resolution provided a new formula for determining the number of clerical and lay members for General Synod from each diocese. The second resolution proposed to reduce the size of COGS by one third (from 42 to 28). A third resolution presented the legitimacy of teleconference and video meetings of COGS.

***Resolution**

COGS received the report of the Governance Working Group and conveyed the contained resolutions to General Synod 2010.

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*Resolution

COGS resolved unanimously to recommend to General Synod 2010 the enactment of the draft canon on the national Indigenous ministry.

After passing these resolutions, COGS members gave a standing ovation in appreciation of the GWG's work, and in recognition of what Randall Fairey noted as a "historic moment" in Aboriginal Anglicans' self-determination.

COGS then considered several other resolutions.

*Resolution

COGS decided by consensus to direct the General Secretary to form a small group to develop a proposed process and draft related materials to enable consideration of the Anglican Communion Covenant, this process to be presented to COGS for their approval at the March 2010 meeting.

*Resolution

COGS decided by consensus that, subject to such recommendations as may be made by the group reviewing the Primacy, recommend to the General Synod that the Constitution and Canon III be amended.

*Resolution

COGS resolved to refer to the Handbook Concerns Committee a resolution about membership of the Partners in Mission and Ecojustice Committee, effective at the beginning of the 2010-2013 Triennium.

The committee shall have 11 members as follows:

- 6 members shall be appointed by the General Synod, at least 5 of whom shall be members of General Synod, and one of whom shall be a member of the Council of General Synod.
- 5 members shall be appointed by the Primate;
- Of the 11 appointed by General Synod or by the Primate, there will be representation from: Indigenous partners, youth, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, overseas partners.

*Resolution

COGS passed a resolution that expressed its dismay and concern over the draft proposed anti-homosexuality bill currently before the parliament of Uganda. COGS resolved to call upon the church of the province of Uganda to oppose this private member's bill, and called upon the Government of Canada, through the Minister of External Affairs, to convey to the government of Uganda a deep sense of alarm about this fundamental violation of human rights and through diplomatic channels, to press for its withdrawal; and asked the Primate to send this message to the appropriate bodies.

At 9:00, COGS members closed with night prayers.