

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



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

**Friday, November 16, 2007
Queen of Apostles, Mississauga, Ont.**

The triennium's first regular meeting of the Council of General Synod opened at 8:45 with the Eucharist, celebrated by Archdeacon Michael Pollesel, General Secretary of General Synod.

Following the Eucharist, members of the council spent time on Bible study in their home groups.

Preliminaries

Following a short break, the chair, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, announced regrets from several council members. He noted that diocesan synods are being held in Toronto and Niagara and that some members would absent themselves from time to time. Suzanne Lawson, chair of the Planning and Agenda Team introduced members of PAT present. Archbishop Hiltz announced that Archbishop Tom Morgan will serve as chaplain of CoGS. He introduced people in attendance as partners, including Judy Kochendorfer, partner from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. Michael Pollesel, the General Secretary, introduced members of Management Team.

Ms Lawson said that most of the day would be spent on orientation, talking about the work that CoGS does and how it does it.

Primate's Reflections

Archbishop Hiltz offered some reflections. The primate brought a mounted poster of the face of Christ which consists of hundreds of human faces. He said he hoped that the church might keep that image before it and see itself as parts of the body of

Christ. He reminded the council of the words of St. Paul, that we are "members one of another."

The Primate submitted a written report that outlines how he has spent his time since assuming office, including significant meetings, visits to dioceses and parishes and other travel. He noted some highlights. He said a planning study has been done around Church House that is significant in finding ways that General Synod staff can best do its work. He said he would try to attend a full meeting of each of the standing committees during the triennium as a means of getting to know both the committees and the staff.

Diocesan visits, he said, are an "absolute delight." He highlighted visits to Brandon and to Huron, which just celebrated its sesquicentennial. The House of Bishops met in London, Ont., as part of that celebration. He also attended a meeting the Council of the North in Edmonton and attended the annual meeting of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund where he was elected president. Ecumenically, he attended the installation of the new National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada where he presented the new bishop, Susan Johnson, with a pastoral staff. In October, he traveled to England where he met the Archbishop of Canterbury and visited the Anglican Communion Office. The Primate said he spent two hours with Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and found him very interested in everything that is happening with the Canadian church.

The Primate noted tensions in the Anglican Communion and said that CoGS would be working on a response to the draft covenant. Archbishop Hiltz said there is pain and frustration with the state of the Communion as it fractures.

He told the Council that he has been notified that Bishop Donald Harvey, retired bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, has relinquished the exercise of ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada and has been received in the jurisdiction of the Southern Cone. "What we have here is a break. We have pain, and we have sorrow," he said. He said the church will craft a statement to come out of this meeting on this event. "This is a decision Donald has made. It is his relinquishment." Archbishop Hiltz said the Archbishop of Canterbury has been informed of this action, because it will have consequences for the Communion. He said he has also spoken to Bishop Harvey.

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The Primate says he is experiencing a sense in the church that there is a great desire to come together as the body of Christ. “It is time for this church to stand up and celebrate what God calls us to be.” We are a church in transition in many ways, he said. There are many changes under way in the Canadian Church, he said, and there is also change in the Communion. “There is far more that draws us together than that tears us apart,” he said. “We need to say this over and over again.”

Archbishop Hiltz read the Anglican Church’s *mission statement* and said that each Anglican can find a place in it. The Primate then invited members of the council to review the statement in their table groups and consider what they can affirm, value and celebrate, and also what might be missing or what might be added is the mission statement were to be changed. Table groups gave brief reports. Generally, most table groups liked the statement, but some noted that there is nothing distinctively Canadian about it and that it has no “oomph.”

Lunch**Council reconvened at 1:15 p.m.****Who we are and what our roles are**

Linda Nicholls of Faith, Worship and Ministry, made a presentation on different models of decision-making as alternatives to the win-lose Parliamentary system. Some churches, she said, have opted for a model of consensus decision-making. The Quakers have used this model for more than 300 years. Ms Nicholls explained how consensus works and what is needed to make it work.

Archbishop Hiltz said that the meeting would experiment with different ways of decision making, including in deciding about the budget.

Suzanne Lawson spoke about expected outcomes of the decision making process. She said that by the end of the meeting, PAT hopes that members of the council would trust each other and that they would have a better understanding of their roles.

Michael Pollesel presented and explained an organization chart for General Synod and its standing committees. All committees relate to and report to the Council of General Synod. One the role of council members, he said, is to go back to their

dioceses and to report on what was learned and what happened at the meetings of the council.

Archbishop Caleb Lawrence spoke about the role of CoGS. People come to CoGS as representations of their home diocese, he said, but once the council meets, members become part of a separate community. He outlined the powers of the council as described in the constitution.

Stephen Andrews, the prolocutor, explained the role of the officers and described how the sessional committees work.

Suzanne Lawson described the nature and role of the Planning and Agenda Team.

Michael Pollesel described the role of the General Secretary.

Priorities for action

Council members broke into small groups. Each group was visited by a representative of each of the standing committees (General Synod departments) for a brief review of the committees’ terms of reference, and of the priorities and challenges of the departments in the coming triennium. The groups also heard about what the committees need and expect from CoGS.

How we will work together (groundrules)

Suzanne Lawson made a presentation on how members of Council can expect other members to behave at meetings. Rules, she said, should come from members and she invited responses. Among them:

- Respect for each other, respect for process
- Respect for the timetable
- Avoid acronyms
- Sensitivity to those who feel uncomfortable in the meeting
- Self-care (length of meetings)
- Good will and the presumption of good will in others
- Encourage questions and clarification because of the learning curve for new members
- Not presuming that silence means consent
- Decisions must be owned by all (loyalty to the decisions)

The General Secretary spoke on the role of **staff** and **guests** at meetings. They are primarily here to provide information or help us reflect. They do not

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vote and should not try to influence voting although they may provide input at table groups.

Michael Ingham described **partnerships** which the Council has with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and with The Episcopal Church (U.S.) Internal partners include the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples and the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund.

Michael Pollesel spoke about appropriate behavior and General Synod's **sexual misconduct policy**.

Suzanne Lawson spoke about different kinds of planning that will be before this council. She explained the difference between **annual planning** and **strategic planning**.

Linda Nicholls made a presentation on the **ecumenical health care network** – a group formed to monitor issues around health care and to ensure that the values on which universal health care was based are being upheld.

Supper break; Council reconvened at 7 p.m.

Statement to the Church

Archbishop Hiltz introduced for consideration by CoGS a draft statement to the church on the subject of retired Bishop Donald Harvey's voluntary relinquishment of the exercise of ordained ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada. Archbishop Hiltz said that Bishop Harvey intends to ordain deacons in the diocese of New Westminster.

Council members discussed the draft statement and asked the Primate some questions. The group that drafted the statement then withdrew to revise it in light of the discussion.

Budget

The treasurer and several members of the Financial Management and Development Committee made the first of three presentations on the General Synod budget for 2008. The treasurer, Peter Blachford, described the process through which the budget was prepared and the different components that are included. Mr. Blachford said that a number of factors allow the church to see 2008 as a year of transition. He also described several assumptions that went into the budgeting process.

Rob Dickson of FMDC spoke about the proposed Development Office which is included in the 2008 budget. He gave a history of this proposal and explained the philosophy behind investment into a Development Office. The establishment of the office, he said, is assisted by a bequest of about \$4 million in 2008.

Mr. Blachford reviewed the figures contained in the 2008 budget.

Council members asked some questions.

Minutes

Council approved the minutes of previous meetings of March 2007 and June, 2007.

Staff Resources Committee

Council approved for the triennium and on a trial basis the creation of a *staff resources committee* that would comment on resolutions in terms of their impact on staff and volunteers.

Statement to the Church, continued

The writing group reported on revisions to the statement to the church. Council unanimously approved the following statement:

A Statement to the Church

From the Council of General Synod

The Council of General Synod, meeting in Mississauga, Ont., from Nov. 16 – 18, 2007, has received with concern the news that Bishop Donald Harvey has voluntarily relinquished, effective immediately, the exercise of ordained ministry in the Anglican Church of Canada, and intends to be received into the Province of the Southern Cone (in South America). Bishop Harvey, retired bishop of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador, has been a valued member of our church, and his decision is a source of sadness.

The Anglican Church of Canada welcomes and respects freedom of individual conscience and the theological convictions of its diverse membership. Our General Synods have consistently sought to honour every voice as we work patiently through contentious and difficult issues before our church. Our bishops have made adequate and appropriate provision for the pastoral care and episcopal sup-

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port of all Canadian Anglicans. We value and respect the diversity of the worldwide Anglican Communion and have expressed our commitment to its ongoing life, even as we also ask for respect and understanding of our own.

To this end we wish to make clear that interventions in the life of our church, such as ordinations or other episcopal acts by any other jurisdictions are inappropriate and unwelcome. In particular, we cannot recognize the legitimacy of recent actions by the Province of the Southern Cone in purporting to extend its jurisdiction beyond its own borders. We call upon the Archbishop of Canterbury to make clear that such actions are not a valid expression of Anglicanism and are in contravention of the ancient and continuing traditions of the Church. They aggravate the current tensions in the Anglican Communion.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for the world, and our primary task as Christians is to make this Gospel known through action and word. We strongly support our Primate's view that the Church in Canada and throughout the world should make Christ and His mission its central focus. We therefore call upon all our members, lay and ordained, to commit themselves to this priority, and to respect the structures and authority of the Church.

We ask your prayers for our continued fellowship in the Spirit and our unity in the bond of peace.

Missionary Society

Council met as the Church Missionary Society and passed certain resolutions.

Council adjourned with evening prayers at 9:20.