

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



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

**Friday, May 8, 2009
Queen of Apostles, Mississauga, Ont.**

The first meeting of the spring 2009 COGS began with a Eucharist, celebrated by Bishop Tom Morgan, COGS chaplain. Members then met in their Bible study groups.

At 10:30, COGS members gathered for opening formalities. The Primate, Archbishop Hiltz, welcomed COGS members, including Bishop Michael Hawkins, and introduced the new prolocutor, Canon Robert Falby (previously the deputy prolocutor). The previous prolocutor was the Rev. Dr. Stephen Andrews, who has been elected as bishop of the Diocese of Algoma.

Archbishop Hiltz listed regrets from COGS members who could not attend this meeting, including the representatives from the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples. He also welcomed the new treasurer, Michèle George, who was welcomed with hearty applause.

Sue Winn presented the orders of the day on behalf of Suzanne Lawson, who is currently serving as a lay delegate to the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) now meeting in Jamaica.

***Resolution** COGS approved by consensus a motion to send a formal thank you Petero Sabune, the Episcopal Church representative to COGS, whose term is ended.

***Resolution** COGS approved the November 2008 meeting minutes.

The Primate explained the role of the prolocutor and the process by which a deputy prolocutor will be elected at this meeting.

Primate's Report

The Primate first commented on the rearrangement of the meeting room. The head table now faces away from several Daliesque paintings of the crucifixion, infamous to (and not always beloved by) all who have visited the Queen of Apostles.

Back to business, the Primate said his report would cover the places he's been and the things he was asked to do, with a particular focus on the idea of mission.

The Primate noted that "mission" has been a driving theme of his work. Wherever he has traveled, he has talked about the Anglican Church of Canada's mission statement—a document he feels is getting some traction from coast to coast. The idea of "mission" has also been the defining theme for several meetings he has recently attended, including a conference on "Mutual Responsibility and Mission in the Americas" in Costa Rica, and the past summer's Lambeth Conference.

Moving to specific reflections, the Primate organized his presentation according to the litany of the Holy Spirit (Book of Alternative Services) which he said aligned well with the Five Marks of Mission.

What follows are the aligned prayers and marks, with selected thoughts from the Primate:

1. The prayer "Come, Holy Spirit, counselor, and touch our lips that we may proclaim your word" fits well with "proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom." The Primate says he's been encouraged along these lines when visiting Labrador, where a planning conference focused on how their local church could live out the Five Marks of Mission.

2. The prayer "Come, Holy Spirit, wisdom and truth strengthen us in the risk of faith" links with the mark of "teaching, baptising and nurturing new believers." The Primate said these words challenge us to prioritize youth ministry, which often suffers during times of budget crisis. He said he has recently been encouraged by the work of the Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF) youth council and PWRDF's 50th anniversary project, which includes a program to develop 50 young leaders. He is also anticipating the 2010 Canadian Anglican-Lutheran Youth Gathering (CLAY).

3. The prayer "Come, Holy Spirit, power from on high, make us agents of peace and ministers of

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wholeness” connects with the mark “To respond to human need by loving service.” The Primate says that a recent trip to Burundi reminded him of his role as an ambassador for the Anglican Church of Canada. (After Burundi, he traveled to Kenya where he heard a creative definition of partnership that resonated with several COGS members: “Partnership is a collaboration to achieve a common goal to transform an unacceptable reality.”)

4. The prayer “Come, Holy Spirit, breath of God, give life to the dry bones of this exiled age, and make us a living people, holy and free” links to the mark “To seek to transform unjust structures of society.” The Primate says that our church is called to act prophetically and help those who are in exile. He spoke of a recent meeting that he and the National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald had with leaders at the Department of Indian Affairs, where, among other things, they encouraged the government to sign the U. N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

4. Finally, the prayer “Come Holy Spirit, creator, and renew the face of the earth” links to the mark which calls us to “strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.” The Primate noted that at the recent Primates’ meeting in Egypt, climate change was an important topic.

Archbishop Hiltz encouraged COGS members to think of these important links while praying the litany of the Holy Spirit during this season of Pentecost.

General Secretary’s Report

General Secretary Michael Pollesel began his reflections by noting the recent financial decisions that were made by and about the COGS meetings. He thanked dioceses and individuals who contributed to the cost of this COGS meeting.

He then reported on three resolutions that COGS had decided by electronic ballot. (They related to the composition of the Anglican Consultative Council.)

Archdeacon Pollesel then discussed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The Anglican Church of Canada is represented on the selection panel for the new TRC commissioners by the Rev. Jamie Scott. The General Secretary expects that the new commissioners will be announced soon.

Archdeacon Pollesel noted that the Church House Management Team had recently met with the management of ELCIC. He described their work as “putting flesh on the bones of full communion.”

Turning to Church House finances, the General Secretary reminded COGS that after the fall meeting, Treasurer Peter Blachford resigned. Michael Herrera, the controller, stepped in as interim treasurer, and General Synod was grateful for his work.

The General Secretary then introduced Michèle George, the new General Synod treasurer, who has been on the job for two weeks. Her experience is extensive, and most recently includes work with a Roman Catholic order of nuns.

“Michèle grew up in Nova Scotia,” noted Archdeacon. Pollesel with a sly glance to the Primate (who hails from Dartmouth, N.S.) “Is the east coast taking over Church House?”

Anglican Consultative Council Update

Sue Winn provided a quick update the ACC meeting, happening now in Kingston, Jamaica. Her highlights included an ACC decision-making plenary, meeting today, that will attempt to make decisions about future of Anglican Covenant and the Windsor Continuation Process. She also noted a proposal to create an Anglican Health Network.

Book on the episcopate

The Primate introduced Archbishop Michael Peers, who recently wrote the fourth edition of *The Anglican Episcopate in Canada*. Archbishop Peers was on hand to sign copies and answer questions about this new offering from ABC Publishing.

At 12:00 Council took a lunch break and reconvened at 2:00.

Election of deputy prolocutor

Bishop Percy Coffin began the election process by showing COGS members the list of those nominated and distributing ballots.

Vision 2019

Paul Goulet, a member of the Vision 2019 task force, kicked off a presentation on Vision 2019, a project to discern the Anglican Church of Canada’s priorities for the period of 2010 to 2019. He outlined the project’s goals and said that there will be a first report by November.

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Lisa Barry, senior producer for Anglican Video, then elaborated on the Tell Us Your Story part of the Vision 2019 project, which asks all Canadian Anglicans to weigh in on the question, “Where is your church now, and where do you want the Anglican Church of Canada to be by 2019?”

Lisa spoke about the potential of using new technology for Vision 2019 and noted that the Anglican Church of Canada is a leader amongst non-profits in that they are welcoming responses by email, phone, video, and post.

Each COGS member received a Vision 2019 kit. It included a poster, Sunday school material, ideas for getting involved, and a bulletin insert (all available at www.anglican.ca/v2019).

Brian Bukowski, web manager, then described the different components of the Vision 2019 website and the Vision 2019 kit. He said that the tech requirements for participating were low: “if you have a stamp, you can participate!”

Two videos of the Vision 2019 project were shown, including one of the baby photo shoot (for the Vision 2019 poster image) and a short advertisement. Paul Goulet then presented on a second stage of Vision 2019, an interfaith symposium on the question “Does faith matter?”

Finance I

Monica Patten, chair of the Financial Management and Development Committee (FMDC) explained to COGS that FMDC wanted to review its governing document, Canon 6. They feel this is a good time, considering that the Department of Philanthropy is taking its own shape apart from FMDC.

She said FMDC needed to address a couple of fundamental questions including, “who ultimately has control of financial matters and financial decisions?” She also wondered about the actual operational role of FMDC, and whether some of its responsibilities (including signing documents) were better placed with Church House management.

Ms. Patten pointed out that this review would be beneficial to other committees, and asked that COGS give their advice. FMDC plans to consult with the handbook committee and have something to bring back to COGS, because this may be an issue to be passed on to General Synod.

***Resolution** Council moved by consensus that FMDC, in consultation with the Governance

Working Group, should pursue these questions around Canon 6.

Finance II

Michèle George presented the 2008 financial statements. She reviewed the auditors’ report and the consolidated statement of financial position. She pointed out that General Synod is in a healthier net cash position than one year ago.

Ms. George pointed out that Michael Herrera had worked to make the financial statements more transparent (i.e. adding more specific budget lines) and he had formatted the document so it could be more easily compared to the budget that COGS approved.

*Resolution

COGS approved the 2008 financial statements.

*Resolution

COGS approved Ernst & Young as auditors for the 2009 fiscal year.

Council took a coffee break from 3:30 to 3:45

Michèle George returned to the microphone and presented the operating results for the first quarter of 2009. She said it’s too early in the year to note true trends, but she did note that both revenues and expenses are under budget at this point.

Pensions Committee

Executive Director Judy Robinson and Laura Solomonian, member of the Pensions board, COGS presented their report and said they were available to field questions.

*Resolution

COGS approved adding a new section to the pension plan that related to early retirement.

Ms. Robinson and Ms. Solomonian answered questions from COGS members about how the pensions funds were managed.

Election of deputy prolocutor

Bishop Coffin announced the first results from the election of the deputy prolocutor. Two names were removed from the second ballots, which were distributed to members.

Philanthropy

Dr. Holland Hendrix offered greetings from the Department of Philanthropy. He said that since the last COGS meeting he has criss-crossed the

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country meeting with many groups and individuals. A national major gifts team is up and running and they are working to assemble a list of major gifts prospects. He pointed out that it takes time to get this sort of thing going and their approach to soliciting major gifts will include the cooperation and collaboration of diocesan bishops and, where appropriate, parish priests, so the major gifts prospects will be asked to support parishes, dioceses, and national church.

Mr. Hendrix noted that the Philanthropy Department is working to prepare a major fundraising initiative with a goal of at least \$100 million, announced in 2010 and launched in 2012. The department will begin a bequest identification process involving all diocesan bishops and General Synod partners.

Speaking further on the topic of diocesan partnerships, Mr. Hendrix noted that his department has already formed relationships with dioceses to help them support their strategic plans. He said the department is interested in setting up more partnerships and encouraged COGS members to speak to their dioceses if they aren't already in conversation with the Philanthropy Department.

COGS members asked questions about how fundraising would include and benefit different partners. Bishop Caleb Lawrence suggested that he meet with the Council of the North and Mr. Hendrix agreed. He noted that he has been in conversation with emerging Indigenous area ministries and has been "impressed by their resourcefulness."

Finally, Mr. Hendrix introduced a new fundraising initiative, a gift catalogue, to be launched in 2010. This catalogue would be similar to those used by the Presbyterian Church in Canada and Episcopal Relief and Development. This idea was initiated by PWRDF but would include items from the General Synod departments, the Anglican Foundation, and other partners.

Election of deputy prolocutor

Bishop Coffin reported on the results of the second ballot. The third ballot was issued.

Council dispersed for dinner at 5:30 and met again at 7:00.

Election of deputy prolocutor

Bishop Coffin announced the results of the third ballot, and COGS members voted once again.

Human sexuality I

Alyson Barnett-Cowan, director of Faith, Worship, and Ministry (FWM) said this evening's presentation would explain three ways that the Faith, Worship, and Ministry Committee (FWMC) has been responding to General Synod 2007 resolutions around sexuality.

Bishop Linda Nicholls presented the Galilee Report, which considered two questions: "whether the blessing of same-sex unions is a faithful, spirit-led development of Christian doctrine"; and "scripture's witness to the integrity of every human person and the question of the sanctity of human relationships."

Bishop Nicholls, chair of the Primate's Theological Commission, noted that the commission did not come to an agreement about the first question, so members submitted individual essays. They were able to come to a consensus on the second question, and this is part of the report.

Canadian Anglicans are now invited to respond to the Galilee Report, answering such questions as, "does this reflect your experience of the Anglican Church of Canada at this time?"

The Rev. Dr. Isaac Kawuki-Mukasa, coordinator for dialogue, then spoke about his assignment from General Synod 2007: "the process to engage the church in a study of human sexuality using the lens of scripture, reason, tradition and science."

Mr. Mukasa spoke about domestic and international progress on this process. Within Canada, facilitators have been trained and nine focus group meetings have been held. In September, FWM is launching a web tool to facilitate conversations, as well as developing a model of inter-diocesan conversations.

On the international front, Mr. Mukasa has been traveling much between Africa and Canada, setting up conversations between dioceses. He noted that there is a tendency on both sides to demonize the other, with Africans imagining North Americans as functioning under the influence of the Devil, and North Americans imagining Africans as angry, barbaric people.

These conversations are well under way, and Mr. Mukasa is setting up more. He hopes that this process can be linked to the official communion

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listening process, which will culminate in a 2010 event, possibly at Canterbury Cathedral.

Janet Marshall, chair of FWMC introduced the Rothesay Report which reports how the committee wrestled with their task to develop a theological rationale for the marriage of same-sex couples. This was the question which COGS had asked the Committee to grapple with.

Ms. Marshall said the committee’s attitude to the topic was lukewarm, and leaned towards “cautious conservatism.” Some members were uncomfortable developing a theological rationale for only one side of the argument, for example.

The Rothesay Report reflects these challenges and is offered to COGS as a study report in the course of discernment.

Ms. Marshall said that COGS must now decide what the next steps are in this discussion of human sexuality (which includes these many parts outlined by FWMC).

COGS members were then given a question to discuss in their table groups: “In light of all of this, what would you like to be able to celebrate on June 10, 2010, the day after General Synod finishes?”

After a short discussion, members shared a variety of things they would like to celebrate, including a church that has not split, a church that discussed these questions honestly, and a church that doesn’t need to talk about issues of same-sex blessings anymore.

Election of deputy prolocutor

The results of the fourth ballot were shared, one name was removed from the list, and the fifth ballot was distributed (on marigold paper).

8:30 Council met for night prayers, then adjourned for the evening.