

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



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

**Friday, November 14, 2008
Valhalla Inn, Toronto, Ont.**

The Council of General Synod began its third meeting of the triennium by celebrating the Eucharist together. Members then spent time in Bible study groups before reconvening.

Opening Formalities

The Primate welcomed COGS members and offered congratulations to several who had been honoured in their diocese. The prolocutor, the Rev. Dr. Stephen Andrews, is now the bishop-elect of the Diocese of Algoma, and two COGS members have been named lay canons: Judy Darling (Diocese of Ottawa) and Barbara Burrows (Diocese of Edmonton).

Several other visitors were anticipated and welcomed, including the president of Anglican Church Women (ACW), Marion Saunders.

Suzanne Lawson then reminded COGS about their process of consensus decision-making, noting that there are several points in the process when members can voice their concerns.

***Resolution**

COGS approved the minutes from May 2008

Agenda Overview

Suzanne Lawson spoke on behalf of the Planning and Agenda Team, noting that the agenda is tailored to reflect the priorities that the council laid out at last meeting.

She also noted that as part of a “greening” of the council, daily highlights (the fancy document you are currently reading) will not be printed and distributed to all members at the meeting, but will be available on the website.

Primate's Report

The Primate, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, then offered his report.

By way of describing his extensive travels over the past six months, the Primate listed over a dozen Eucharists that have served as landmarks. This included Eucharists in the dioceses of the Arctic, Kootenay, Niagara, and the Chapel of the Holy Apostles at Church House. At the Generation 2008 conference in London, Ont. he took part in a Eucharist that was led by a newly ordained priest.

The Primate then offered a Lambeth presentation, which he said is becoming known as the “M&M” presentation; everything he recalls from the conference begins with an “M.”

He spoke first about the meditations offered at Lambeth by Archbishop Rowan Williams. The Primate was moved by these times, and said the archbishop stood tall as a poet, mystic, and scholar, even though he was battered by current issues in the communion. Archbishop Williams emphasized that Lambeth was a time to celebrate, deepen, and in some cases restore communion.

Another Lambeth “M” word was moratoria. The Lambeth Conference called for moratoria on the blessings of same-sex unions, ordaining of practicing homosexual bishops and cross-border

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

interventions. The House of Bishops recently called for the upholding of the moratoria, and the Primate emphasized that this was an honest reflection of where the Canadian church was.

The Primate also said that in the interests of clarity and transparency he sent this statement from the House of Bishops to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He further noted that there is a growing frustration amongst Canadian bishops about continuing cross-border interventions, where external bishops are assuming authority for certain Canadian congregations.

However, the Primate noted, the world will remember the Lambeth conference for another two “M” words: the march for the Millennium Development Goals (which all the bishops undertook in London) and the mandate to take this march home. Archbishop Hiltz briefly described the Sept. 25 MDGs march that the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada participated in, in Ottawa.

General Secretary’s Report

General Secretary, the Ven. Michael Pollesel, first spoke on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on residential schools, which has recently stalled after the resignation of its chair, Justice Harry LaForme. The General Secretary said the Anglican Church of Canada was encouraging the other two commissioners to remain, because they wanted to see the commission back on track as soon as possible.

The General Secretary then presented a thought on the church’s new vision, citing a quote on his office wall: “to be doing something good can sometimes be the greatest obstacle to doing something better.” He said he believed that God has brought us to this place, with financial challenges, new leadership, are an opportunity to do something better.

Finally, he introduced Dr. Holland Hendrix, the new executive director of philanthropy. Members met for lunch.

12:30-2:00 COGS sang “Amazing Grace” for the Amazing Grace Project, offered midday prayers, and met for lunch

Report from Pensions Committee

Bishop Philip Poole reported on behalf of the Pensions Committee.

***Resolution**

COGS approved several canonical revisions, including specifying what the term “bishop” meant in the Pension Committee’s documentation.

Bishop Poole also spoke about the state of the pension fund in light of the current financial crisis. “If we needed the money now it would be a problem, but we’re in it for the long haul,” he said. “We have every confidence that the long-term objectives of the plan will be met.”

Priority Planning for the Triennium

Suzanne Lawson reviewed the priorities that COGS decided on at the May 2008 meeting.

- Active and focused ministry
- Faithful community life
- Quality communication and education
- Sound leadership and governance
- Effective stewardship

Management team undertook the same exercise, and consultants pulled the two results together into a detailed breakdown, which was distributed to COGS. These priorities will inform how the Planning and Agenda Team shapes the agenda for the COGS.

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

Budget Session

The Primate framed the budget discussion in terms of the five marks of a healthy church, as identified by the Alban Institute:

1. People know who they are before God
2. They know what they are called to do
3. They have the resources to carry out their calling
4. People are experiencing the gospel
5. The church is making a real difference in individual lives, the community, and the world.

The Primate noted that the Anglican Church of Canada is certainly impacting people's lives, but currently the church does not have the resources to maintain its ministry. He said General Synod has a long history of budgeting for deficits, and this needs to stop. From 2003 to 2008, the church has run deficits, which have ranged from \$430,000 to \$1.4 million.

After Financial Management and Development Committee (FMDC) did not approve the 2008 budget in October, Management Team spent much time discussing the church's position. In consultation with FMDC, a decision was made to cut \$1.3 million from the proposed '09 budget in order to achieve a smaller deficit (\$800,000) alongside a recovery plan with slowly decreasing deficits over the next few years. The goal is for the 2012 budget to be balanced.

COGS was given this new 2008 consolidated budget. The Primate said that the line-by-line considerations would be left up to Management Team.

The chair of FMDC, Monica Patten, then walked COGS through the different items in the consolidated budget. COGS members asked some questions. There

will be more time tomorrow for discussion and decision-making around the budget.

3:30-3:45 break

General Synod Planning Committee

Barbara Burrows spoke on behalf of the 2010 General Synod planning committee, and described its aspirations for a "greener" meeting, which uses less paper.

She also presented the proposed title for the meeting, "Feeling the winds of God—setting a new course." Several members raised questions about this new title, so decisions were postponed until tomorrow.

Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP)

The Ven. Sidney Black, co-chair of ACIP, led a presentation on native ministries. He spoke about ACIP's conversations with Eduardo Gonzalez from the International Centre for Transitional Justice around the topic of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

He also shared two stories from the Blackfoot nation, where men had visions about interacting with the church. He said that Indigenous Peoples are saying, "we have demonstrated to the church our gifts and our talents, and we are asking you to lay your hands on us and confirm our ministries so we can continue to do that work of ministry within our own community."

The Rev. Gloria Moses, ACIP co-chair, then shared some of the difficult realities of Indigenous ministry. She said the recent influx of residential schools settlement money has led to an increase in drugs, violence and suicide. The Rev. Moses also noted that the federal government's apology for residential schools opened old wounds, and it will be difficult for communities to have these wounds open during the five-year Truth and Reconciliation process. Finally, she noted that ministers are on the front lines of

COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD (COGS) – DAILY HIGHLIGHTS

these problems—spending long days grieving with families, and being available at all hours for support.

Archdeacon Larry Beardy then spoke about the new area mission in northern Manitoba, and invited COGS members to join him in his excitement. This part of the Canadian church is quickly moving towards self-governance.

National Indigenous Anglican Bishop Mark MacDonald concluded the presentation by giving some context to this energy in Indigenous Ministries: “I think the most appropriate word about where we are is that the kingdom of God has come near you—turn around and believe the good news,” he said. Bishop MacDonald also noted that the gospels are the “playbook” for where Indigenous Ministries should go next.

No Debate List

COGS members reviewed the no debate list, and decided to consider it overnight.

5:30-7:00 Council met for dinner

Vision 2019

Dean Peter Elliott gave COGS an update on the Vision 2019 strategic plan. To get the creative and spiritual juices flowing, COGS members sang a hymn, “As a fire is meant for burning,” and reflected on Isaiah 61: 1-4, 8-11.

Dean Elliott then outlined several phases of Vision 2019:

1. Canadian Anglicans will participate in a Lenten study on the 5 Marks of Mission. These documents will be available soon on the web, and can be used in a variety of ways and times by parishes.
2. Canadian Anglicans will have the opportunity to give input on where they think the church should be going. They can submit

their own stories (in video, audio, written form, etc.) for the church’s review. This period will last approximately until Pentecost 2009.

3. The Vision 2019 team will listen to what has been presented, from summer until Christmas 2009
4. The Vision 2019 team will compile these results into a compelling case, to be presented by February 2010.
5. The Vision 2019 team will develop a critical path for living out this plan.

Paul Goulet presented an idea for a national symposium in 2011: “Does faith matter: a dialogue about religious relevance in tomorrow’s Canada?” He said that this would be a key way to connect with the Canadian public more generally, and carry some of the Vision 2019 ideas forward.

***Resolution**

COGS members passed four resolutions in support of the direction and work of Vision 2019.

Church Missionary Society

COGS met as members of the Church Missionary Society, which is a historic society that used to receive bequests for overseas missions. Members of COGS are the board of management for this organization, and new members asked questions about the history and current function of this society.

***Resolution**

COGS approved the financial statements for the Church Missionary Society

***Resolution**

COGS resolved to appoint Ernst and Young as the Church Missionary Society’s auditors

9:00 General Synod closed with night prayers.