



MARCH 8 – 11, 2007
QUEEN OF APOSTLES, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

Thursday, March 8, 2007

Council convened at 9 a.m. with the Primate in the chair. Archbishop **Andrew Hutchison** welcomed the council to its last meeting of the triennium. He welcomed Dean Louise Peters from the Anglican Parishes of the Central Interior and Canon Petero Sabune, the new partner from The Episcopal Church. There are a number of regrets, including one from Bishop Mark MacDonald, the new National Indigenous Bishop, who is ill.

Bishop **Jim Cowan**, chair of the Planning and Agenda Committee, reviewed the agenda for the four-day meeting. He mentioned a meeting the previous day of Planning and Agenda Team, CoGS members of committees and Management Team of General Synod that listed items to celebrate in the past triennium and he invited CoGS members to contribute to the list. Yesterday’s meeting also formulated several messages to be forwarded to the next Council of General Synod.

Archbishop **Terry Finlay**, chaplain, lead members of the council in prayer, Bible study and worship. He noted that today is International Women’s Day. Bishop Finlay invited members

to reflect on the theme of the triennium: *Serving God’s world, strengthening the church*. Members did so in table groups and then reported back.

- We are being sidetracked from the *real* issues facing the church by sexual issues.
- Service to God’s world must come before concerns for the institution of the church.
- The sacredness of the church and the role of leadership.
- We must show the world our love for God.
- We spend too much time on ‘What is the church?’ and not enough time on ‘What is the church *for*?’

Break

Council approved the **minutes** from its November, 2006 meeting with corrections.

Council received a report from the **General Secretary**, Archdeacon **Michael Pollesel**. Several items in the report will be considered as motions later in the meeting. Michael also reported on the second meeting of the Prioritized Operations Plan (POP) working group and on progress with the renegotiated Residential Schools Agreement.

Council heard reflections from the **Primate**, Archbishop **Andrew Hutchison** on communion affairs and the recent Primates’ Meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He described the layout and progress of the meeting day by day. He noted that all Primates came to the table with the new Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church and that they dealt with her graciously and with respect. There were 14 new Primates at the meeting. Seven Primates were not present at the daily Eucharist, but that is only half the number who absented themselves at Dromantine. On the Sunday, the Primates traveled to Zanzibar for a commemoration of the end of the slave trade. The cathedral is built on the site of a slave market.

A report was received on theological education around the communion. A report was also received on the TEAM conference in South Africa, now under way, which focuses on poverty and AIDS and the relationship between the two.



Bishops Peter Coffin and Philip Poole are attending.

On sexual issues, Canada was never even mentioned. There are several reasons: good relationships on a personal level with Primates; we have complied with requests from Dromantine; our process continues and will culminate with General Synod in June.

A report was received from the Joint Standing Committee on whether TEC had responded adequately to requests from the Communion and the finding was that for the most part it had. The issue of a moratorium on same-sex blessings was the main point of contention. A report was also received from the Panel of Reference. The meeting heard from the Covenant Design Group, and a draft covenant is now on the web. It has been commended to provinces for study and response (prior to Lambeth.)

The communiqué was the work of a writing group that worked throughout the gathering to produce it. "Several of us held our noses and though it was less than we wanted, signed. I was prepared to go either way on this." The Primate said he told Presiding Bishop Jefferts-Schori that he would sign if she did and in the end all Primates signed the document. Several provinces, including that of the Archbishop of Canterbury have been blessing same-sex unions for 30 years, but it has been done secretly.

A report was received on the Listening Process.

On the final day, discussion on the communiqué lasted until after 11 p.m.

"Canada as yet is not on the block. They will wait until they have heard from our General Synod but should we chose to go in a particular direction, what we have here is a template of what we can expect in Canada."

Despite all that, our relationships in the communion continue to be good. The U.S. House of Bishops meets next week and will begin to discuss the contents of the communiqué.

The Primate answered questions.

Bishop Michael Ingham noted that the Primates are not the governing body of the Anglican Communion and that the notion that they can say who is or is not a member of the Communion "is offensive." The Primate agreed that the Primates "are assuming an authority that is not their's."

The Primate noted that the Archbishop of Canterbury will visit Canada next month, for two purposes: to deliver a lecture at Trinity and to lead a one-day retreat at the meeting of the House of Bishops in Niagara Falls, Ont.

Several members of Council expressed their gratitude to the Primate for his leadership at the Primates' Meeting and on the issues that remain controversial.

Council recessed for lunch at 11:50 and reconvened at 2 p.m.

Council heard a report from **The Episcopal Church Executive Council** from Bishops Rod Andrews and Michael Ingham, the Canadian church's partners, and TEC partner Canon Petero Sabune. Bishop Andrews attended an earlier meeting as alternate while Bishop Ingham was on sabbatical.

Bishop Andrews described what it was like to attend the first Executive Council meeting after the election of Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts-Schori.

Bishop Ingham reported on the most recent meeting of the Council and described several areas of work and initiatives currently under way. He noted that the Presiding Bishop's reflections on the Primate's meeting were much like the Primate's.

Petero Sabune said he finds this a very exciting time to be in the church. He noted that the new U.S. Primate is both a pilot and an oceanographer and that she sees both a bird's eye view of the church and a view in depth.

The Council heard a report from the **Windsor Report Response Group** presented by Patricia Bays and Alyson Barnett-Cowan. Peter Elliott, the prolocutor, explained that information would be received this afternoon and that there would be the opportunity to comment and ask questions later this evening. The report proposes some resolutions and motions by which CoGS might adopt the report of the response group and bring some further motions to General Synod. The report also proposes a resolution dealing with the draft covenant produced by the Covenant Design Group.

Members of the Council made comments and asked some questions both on the response to the



Windsor Report and to the Draft Covenant and associated process. Members made several suggestions on areas of the process suggested to deal with the draft covenant that might need to be reworked or reconsidered.

Break

Council considered a report from the **Handbook Concerns Committee** presented by General Synod Chancellor Ron Stevenson, dealing with procedures around the St. Michael Report. It is the opinion of the committee that if the conclusion of the St. Michael Report to the effect that blessing same-sex unions is doctrinal is accepted, then a new Canon will have to be proposed. The Handbook Concerns Committee proposed four draft Canons and the Faith Worship and Ministry committee then produced a fifth draft Canon. Council discussed the draft Canon proposed by Faith, Worship and Ministry. Council will return to this matter in Committee of the Whole.

The committee also presented a suggested amendment to the *Declaration of Principles* to allow for the election by an appropriate body of the National Indigenous Bishop and the Bishop Ordinary of the Armed Forces and their consecration by the Primate. Council **agreed** to recommend first reading of the amendment to the General Synod.

Council **agreed** to recommend an amendment of the *Declaration of Principles* giving the National Indigenous Bishop membership in the General Synod.

Council considered a report from the **General Synod Planning Committee** presented by Dean Peter Wall. The report contained a number of procedural motions relating to General Synod. Several were adopted and one was held pending discussion of a report on governance. The report also contained a number of items for information. Members asked questions and made some comments.

*Council recessed for dinner at 4:45
and reconvened at 7 p.m.*

Council reconvened in **committee of the whole** to consider a number of issues.

Peter Elliott suggested three goals for council to consider: 1) To send a positive message to lesbian and gay Anglicans in Canada, both those who are civilly married and those in committed partnerships; 2) To affirm the autonomy and interdependence of our church in the Anglican Communion; 3) Find a way for the church to include the breadth of Christian views on homosexuality. We must acknowledge the diversity of views. Dean Elliott said that a change to the Canons to resolve the same-sex issue would be very difficult because of the requirement for a two-thirds majority.

Council members commented on different aspects of dealing with the same-sex issue through a canonical change.

- A two-thirds majority requirement over two General Synods would be very hard to achieve;
- A canonical change would cause consternation in some churches with which we engage in ecumenical dialogue;
- Perhaps it is the marriage canon that should be amended to encompass same-sex couples;
- The worst possible outcome of General Synod would be to do nothing or appear to have done nothing;
- A canonical change is only an issue if the conclusion of the St. Michael Report that same-sex blessings are a doctrinal issue is accepted. Another option would be to simply receive the report and thank its authors.
- The St. Michael Report has been in circulation for some time and there has not been a written dissenting opinion so far.
- Is there a common understanding of the difference between doctrine and core doctrine?
- The cost of seeking a canonical change is too great and will result in gridlock for the church.
- We want an explicit rule that is nuanced. You can't have it both ways.
- This question should not have been referred to the Primate's Theological Commission. The commission produced a poor piece of work that is vague and not helpful. We should receive the St. Michael Report and then go back to



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COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD, MISSISSAUGA, ONT. – MARCH 8 – 11, 2007

consider the deferred motion from
2004.

*Council adjourned for evening
prayers at 8:45 p.m.*