

**Subject: Governance – Consultation with Dioceses**

**Moved By:**

**Seconded By:**

Note: The mover and the seconder must be members of the General Synod and be present in the House when the resolution is before the synod for debate.

**BE IT RESOLVED:**

That the Primate, after consultation with the House of Bishops, be requested to initiate discussion with the provinces and dioceses of the Anglican Church of Canada regarding:

- 1) the possible reform of the provincial organization of the Anglican Church of Canada, and, in particular, whether the effectiveness and efficiency of the Anglican Church of Canada would be significantly improved by:
  - a) entirely eliminating the four provinces from the organizational structure of the church and transferring the powers and authority the provinces presently hold to the General Synod, or
  - b) maintaining the existing provincial structure for some part of its present purpose and transferring part of provincial power and authority, for example part or all of provincial legislative authority, to the General Synod, or
  - c) reorganizing the dioceses into groupings with greater common goals, concerns, needs and interests than the collections of dioceses forming the existing provinces.
  
- 2) the possible reform of the diocesan organization of the Anglican Church of Canada, in particular by:
  - a) adjusting diocesan boundaries to reflect modern transportation patterns and population shifts created by social and economic changes,
  - b) reducing of the number of dioceses within the Anglican Church of Canada,
  - c) implementing any other change that might improve the effectiveness, efficiency, or economy of the operation of dioceses.

## **EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

General Synod in 2004 asked the Council of General Synod to review its governance structures. The Governance Working Group undertook this work and is presenting to General Synod several recommendations and proposed constitutional changes that would affect the form and operations of the General Synod.

In pursuing this work it soon became evident that issues of governance arise at all levels of church life. Although General Synod has no jurisdiction with regard to the organization or life of provinces, dioceses or parishes, it does have a concern for the well-being of the entire church, as expressed in Section 8 of the Declaration of Principles:

- i. Subject to the provisions of Section 7 the General Synod shall have authority and jurisdiction in all matters affecting in any way the general interest and well-being of the whole Church ...

In this spirit the Working Group proposed to the Council of General Synod that other levels of church government - provinces and dioceses - be invited into discussions on the points raised above.

### Role of Provinces

It is always a risk for General Synod to raise questions about provincial synods. Inevitably it will be interpreted as an improper quest for a more centralized authority.

In framing this resolution however, the attempt is to invite dioceses and provinces into discussion about the amount of government that is appropriate in this day and age for a declining church. Is our current three level structure sustainable? Would it be possible for provinces to cede its jurisdiction to General Synod, in fact making the national church the 'province' as that term is understood in other parts of the Anglican Communion? Another approach might be to cede some elements of jurisdiction and retain others, perhaps replacing provincial synods with less formal provincial councils.

### Diocesan and Provincial Boundaries

Jurisdiction with regard to boundaries and realignments or amalgamations rests with provinces and dioceses, although the consent of the General Synod is required (Declaration of Principles, Section 7.b.iii). Canada was divided into provinces and dioceses as the country was settled and in relation to transportation and settlement patterns that were relevant at the time. Some dioceses and provinces correspond to civil jurisdictions; some do not. Some are small, some large, some heavily populated, some sparsely so. In recent years there has never been a systematic study of dioceses and provinces in relation to population, geography, transport patterns and cultural communities.

Several factors would suggest that such a study and conversation is appropriate now:

- a) Since 1971 the number of Anglicans identified in the Canadian census has decreased by 20%. Church statistics collected from dioceses indicate that the

number of Anglicans on parish rolls had decreased by 42%. The attached appendix shows the decrease by diocese. While numbers have decreased substantially during this period, governance structures have been unchanged, in fact in some instances, have grown. General Synod itself now has approximately 20 more members than it did in 1971.

- b) Financing the work of the church at all levels is an increasing challenge. The proportion of budgets that supports governance grows, as it is usually easier to cut expenses in other areas of work. The mission of the church suffers. Ministry in the northern dioceses through the Council of the North is threatened as the General Synod budget is under continuing pressure.
- c) A volunteer organization always struggles with a governance model that involves a wide representation of members in governance, and at the same time provides the volunteer hours needed in front line service. Time taken at parish meetings, diocesan synods or national committee gatherings might diminish the possibilities for mission in neighbourhoods and on the streets.
- d) The church has much to learn from secular society in matters of efficiency in governance. There are experts in our pews who know how organizations operate, how leadership is nurtured and supported. There is an opportunity to call forth these people and engage them in discussion and debate as to our organization and its effectiveness.

#### Number of Dioceses

In 1971 there was an average of 38,249 Anglicans in each diocese, according to the parish rolls. By 2001, that number had dropped to 21,395. Twenty dioceses had numbers below this average. There may be significant advantages in reducing the number of dioceses in several parts of the country by amalgamation or grouping of dioceses to seek efficiencies in delivery of ministry and in administrative costs.

If the above motion is passed by General Synod, further work would need to be done in preparation of a series of papers expanding on the issues of jurisdiction, the history and evolution of provinces, dioceses and General Synod, and possible options to assist in promoting and furthering these discussions.

Source: The Council of General Synod  
(name of committee, diocese, etc.)

Submitted by: The General Secretary

**A) Does this motion contain within it any financial implications?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**B) If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications?**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

