

THE COUNCIL OF GENERAL SYNOD

To the Members of the General Synod:

THE COUNCIL, ITS MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS

The Council, consisting of 40 members, is the successor to the National Executive Council, was established by the 1995 General Synod. The Council met six times during the Triennium and submits this report of its actions. The first organizational meeting was held during the 1995 General Synod when various housekeeping matters were discussed.

In the fall of 1995 the regular meetings of the Council and of committees were cancelled as the result of a budgetary measure taken in 1994. Savings of \$250,000 were realized, but this action delayed the commencement of much committee and council work. The first full meeting of the Council in March, 1996 was in the context of a meeting of all committees, with overlapping time for all participants to review and reflect on the 1995 strategic plan.

An invitation was extended to the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church USA to meet with our Council, and that meeting took place in November, 1996 in Toronto. Each Council met separately for part of the time, and joint sessions provided opportunities for the council members to discuss mutual concerns and participate with each other in exploration of issues. Reports on the 10th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council and on planning for the Lambeth Conference, 1998, were shared. An overseas partner, The Reverend Miguel Tamayo, a Cuban priest working in Uruguay participated in the meeting and shared his reflections. The participants visited the Church of the Holy Trinity in downtown Toronto where they were welcomed by the Bishop of Toronto and the parish community. The Presiding Bishop, Edmund Browning, expressed appreciation to the Council of General Synod for this special occasion.

The next meeting of the Council in May, 1997 was held in Vancouver, in response to an invitation from the Bishop of New Westminster. Included were opportunities for members to visit different aspects of mission work in the diocese, a diocesan dinner and participation in worship in local parishes.

The two remaining meetings were held in Mississauga in November, 1997 and March, 1998.

At most meetings, partners from the Episcopal Church USA were present and reflected with the Council on their perceptions. Appreciation was expressed to the Reverend Ran Chase, Diane Porter and Vernon Hazlewood who shared in

this partnership. On behalf of the Council, Dean James Merrett, Archdeacon Rodney Andrews and Suzanne Lawson attended various meetings of the Episcopal Church's Executive Council and reported back from time to time. The Council agreed to extend this partnership for the next triennium.

At each meeting the Primate reported to the Council, giving a review of his activities and outlining the challenges he saw and the opportunities that lay before the Church.

At the May, 1997 meeting, the Council reviewed in depth two goal areas of the strategic plan: **Ministry in the North** and **Ecumenical Relations**. At the same meeting, an extensive review of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report was undertaken.

One Council member from the Diocese of Ontario, Mary Lou Workman, resigned in 1996 and was replaced by Dorothy Davies Flindall.

During the course of the triennium, two Officers of General Synod resigned. Suzanne Lawson, the Executive Director of Program, left in 1997 to accept another position. Suzanne was responsible for facilitating the development of the Church's strategic plan and committee restructuring of 1995. Robert Armstrong resigned in 1997 as Treasurer.

The Council at its last meeting granted the Anglican Award of Merit to:

Mrs. Betty Gracie	Toronto
Ms. Kendra Gregson	Niagara
Canon Michael Iveson	Ottawa
Mr. Grant Walker	New Westminster

Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault Guidelines

In 1996 the Council concurred with an action by the Officers in establishing a review process for the above Guidelines. Ms Linda Barry-Hollowell of St. Catharines chaired the review group and, following extensive consultation, reported to the March, 1998 meeting. Revised **Guidelines** were approved.

General Synod, 1998

The Council chose McGill University, Montreal as the site for the 1998 General Synod, May 21 to May 29.

In November, 1996 the Council appointed a task force to conduct a review of the 1995 video broadcasts.

Financial Concerns

In each year the Council received the annual audited consolidated financial statements and approved budgets for the ensuing year for the General Synod, Primate's World Relief and Development Fund and the Pension Fund. The Council also directed the Financial Management and Development Committee to prepare a three-year budget for 1999-2001.

The Council adopted principles to govern financial development of PWRDF, setting it clearly in the context of parish stewardship, noting that it is part of the national program of the Church, yet a separate fund, and that networking and sharing of information are critical goals.

In May, 1997 the Council approved an increase in assessment for the Continuing Education Plan from \$225 per year to \$600 per year, to be phased in over a three year period, with cost sharing arrangements as between employee (25%) and employer (75%) remaining as at present:

The Council accepted recommendations arising out of a feasibility study on a coordinated fundraising campaign. The study indicated that this is not the time for a nationally coordinated fundraising campaign but that the national church has a role in continuing the Anglican Appeal, its planned giving work, and other pilot projects in partnership with dioceses.

The Council authorized the Officers to negotiate further with a developer regarding the possible sale of Church House and its replacement with a high rise residential development which would house the national church offices on the lower floors.

The Council endorsed the principles in a Proportional Giving Proposal for Diocesan Funding of National and International Mission and Ministry for presentation to General Synod. This proposal would replace the present Assessment and Apportionment requests to dioceses.

ACPO and Discernment for Ministry

The Council requested the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee to establish a consultation to review the role of ACPO and related matter of discernment for ministry. A major recommendation which was accepted was to transfer responsibility for ACPO to the House of Bishops, to be administered through the Primate's Office. The report called for the development of a parallel process for assessment for the vocational diaconate by 2001. Other recommendations touched on concerns about the discernment process and the relevant roles of the Bishop, theological college and ACPO.

The Council also called for a feasibility study by the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee regarding national standards for theological education in Canada.

Strong endorsement and encouragement of continuing education for clergy was given by the Council in adopting further recommendations from the consultation.

Further consultation is to take place with regard to discernment for ministry in aboriginal contexts.

Health Benefits for Same Sex Partners

In March, 1996 the Council reviewed a decision taken by the Pension Committee to make it possible for participating employers to provide benefits for same-sex partners, noting that this decision does not change the doctrinal position of the Anglican Church on marriage, as expressed in Canon XXI.

Appointments

The Council appointed Mr. James Cullen, C.A. at Treasurer at its March, 1998 meeting.

The Council elected Bishop Michael Ingham as the alternate bishop member of the Anglican Consultative Council, and Stephen Toope as lay member, with Suzanne Lawson as alternate.

The Council appointed Archbishop Barry Curtis, Archdeacon Jim Boyles and Mrs. Elizabeth Stewart, Diocese of British Columbia, to be members of the Governing Board of the Canadian Council of Churches.

A Planning Committee for the 1998 General Synod was appointed, chaired by Canon Allen Box, Ottawa.

Delegates to the 1998 World Council of Churches' Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe were appointed: The Reverend Dr. Wendy Fletcher-Marsh, Huron, Mr. Paul Hinton, Quebec, Dr. Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Huron, Ms. A.J. Finlay, Toronto, and the Reverend Arthur Anderson, Qu'Appelle.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples

The Council heard a presentation on the Commission's report in May, 1997, and passed a resolution asking the Canadian government to:
establish a public inquiry into the residential schools; and
call a meeting of First Ministers within six months

The Council urged the church at all levels to explore a new relationship between non-aboriginal and aboriginal people as envisaged in the report, and asked the Primate to appoint a task force to further this work.

Other Actions

Approved amendments to several Regulations under Canons VIII and IX relating to the pension funds, and to Canon XII relating to the Continuing Education Plan. In November, 1997 approval was given to significant increases in pension benefits upon recommendation of the Pension Committee, based on an actuarial evaluation. A self-insured death benefit plan was approved, effective January 1, 1998.

The Council received the *Principles and Recommendations* of the Fifth Anglican Liturgical Consultation and commended them to the Church for study. The draft document, "CLAD to Full Communion" was commended for study

as well, and a declaration of full communion, "*Called to Full Communion*," was received and forwarded to General Synod for consideration.

A statement on euthanasia and assisted suicide was received in March, 1998 and forwarded to General Synod for consideration.

A statement, *Anglican Church of Canada Guidelines for Worship Involving Christians and People of Other Faith Traditions* was authorized for publication.

Supplementary liturgical material as mandated by the last General Synod was received and forwarded to General Synod for consideration.

A strategic plan, 1996-98, for the Primate's Fund, *Give Us A Thirst for Justice*, was approved.

Support was given to the Gitksan Nation in its appeal to the Supreme Court.

The Council approved the membership of the Church in *Mines Action Canada*.

A statement expressing solidarity with the Heads of Christian communities in Jerusalem on the significance of Jerusalem was adopted. At the same meeting, March, 1996, a statement expressing support for the peace process in the Holy Land and sadness about violent attacks on innocent people there was adopted.

The Council in November, 1996 adopted a statement condemning violence in Burundi and calling for increased efforts to secure peace in that country and region.

At the same meeting a resolution expressing concern about the political crisis in eastern Zaire was passed.

In November 1996, the Council passed three resolutions with regard to Cuba: expressing opposition to the U.S. Helms-Burton law; expressing support for the Cuban people; and encouraging Canadian Anglicans to consider vacations in Cuba, Canada or the Caribbean in preference to American destinations.

The Council commended the observance of June 21 as a National Day of Reconciliation

and endorsed the request from the Sacred Assembly to have that day declared a national holiday.

The Council endorsed the World Council of Churches' Climate Change Petition.

Concern about gambling was raised, and the appropriate committees were asked to study and report on this issue.

The Council urged the Church at all levels to become informed and engaged around the proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investments, noting the far-reaching implications of this action.

The Council re-established the Socially Responsible Investment Group (SRIG) to monitor the Investment Policy Statement of General Synod.

The Council monitored relationships with the ecumenical coalitions from time to time, and called for a review and evaluation of their work.

The Council committed the church to participation in the Canadian Jubilee Initiative and to work ecumenically in promoting this theme. A workshop at the March, 1998 meeting assisted Council members in understanding this initiative.

The Council considered several proposals to amend parts of the Handbook of General Synod, which will be placed before the Synod in 1998 for consideration.

The Council gave its approval to the application of the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops for membership in the Canadian Council of Churches.

Approval was given to a publishing policy for the Anglican Book Centre, in accordance with its mission to serve the publishing requirements of General Synod and *"...to produce original resources that will inspire, inform, educate, challenge and support the church and related constituencies"*.

The Council sent a message of congratulations and support to the dioceses of Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama on the formation of a new Province of the Central American Region in April, 1998.

During the last year of the triennium some Council members participated in a consultation process with 26 of the dioceses. A report on the consultations was received at the March, 1998 meeting and the Council decided to continue such consultations in the future.

Archdeacon Jim Boyles
General Secretary

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