
M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: March 15, 2004
TO: Members of General Synod
FROM: Eric Beresford: Consultant, Ethics and Interfaith Relations.
RE: Resources to Prepare for the Discussion of the Motion on the
Blessing of Same Sex Unions
CC:

Dear General Synod Member,

In the research that was done in order to help both FWM and CoGS prepare the motion that has been forwarded to General Synod we heard that many members of the Church are concerned to have assistance in identifying resources that will help them prepare for the discussion of this motion.

Both the Diocese of Edmonton and the diocese of Toronto have prepared resource lists on line.

The Edmonton resource list is extensive and divided into several categories; It can be found at <http://edmonton.anglican.org/Intro%20from%20Bishop%20with%20Prayer.html>

The Toronto list is also divided into useful category headings. It is shorter but clearly annotated. It is at http://www.toronto.anglican.ca/images/1samesex_bibliography.pdf

The FWM committee also recommended that you consult the Report of the General Synod Task Force on Jurisdiction. You will find this report posted at <http://generalsynod.anglican.ca/ministries/departments/doc.php?id=183&dept=fwm>

FWM produced a statement that arose from its own experience of discussing this difficult issue and decided to make available the final report of the International Anglican Conversations on Human Sexuality. These can be found at the FWM web site at <http://generalsynod.anglican.ca/ministries/departments/doc.php?id=18&dept=fwm>

Other resources that were commended by the committee include related motions from previous synods and also the statement issued by the House of Bishops in October of 1997. They are attached to this memo.

If you are unable to access any of the web based resource lists please do not hesitate to contact me at church house and I will send you copies of the resource list by mail, email (eberesford@national.anglican.ca) or by fax.

In Christ,

Eric B. Beresford

RESOLUTIONS

GS 2001 – Dignity, Inclusion and Fair Treatment

That this General Synod adopt A Call to Human Dignity: A Statement of Principles on Dignity, Inclusion, and Fair Treatment and commend it to each diocese for implementation, with the further recommendation that a progress report be compiled with information on the implementation in each diocese and be brought back for consideration by General Synod in 2004.

The text of the statement reads:

A Call to Human Dignity: A Statement of Principles for the Anglican Church of Canada on Dignity, Inclusion, and Fair Treatment

We, as brothers and sisters in the Anglican Church of Canada, affirm God's call to a new humanity in Christ, a humanity that exists as one body with many parts, embracing every people, nation and language. We affirm our call to live as one body in a household where the doors are always open, and all are welcome and safe.

As further affirmation of our new humanity, we remember the covenant we made in our vows of baptism to:

Believe in God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and God the Holy Spirit;
Continue in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers;
Resist evil, and whenever we fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord;
Proclaim the good news of God in Christ;
Seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbour as ourselves;
Strive for justice and peace and respect the dignity of every human being.

Footnote 1

While committing ourselves to these vows, we acknowledge that keeping them is difficult and requires costly sacrifice on our part.

Confronted by the sins and omissions of our past, we are ashamed that we have wandered from the way and rebelled against God. We have failed to proclaim the good news. We have fallen short in service to God and to our neighbours. The church is one body; when one part is wounded, the whole body suffers. Christ took on human flesh and made us one with him. When we hurt another human being, we hurt him. Yet we know that, just as he was one with us in his suffering, we are one with him in his resurrection. We receive God's forgiveness in all its richness and rejoice in God's gifts of healing and reconciliation; we are empowered by the Holy Spirit for fullness of life.

We have a responsibility to treat everyone in a way that is faithful to our call as a Christian people. Jesus sums up the commandments when he says to us, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

All persons seeking spiritual care and nurture, as well as those pursuing employment and those people employed by our church shall be treated with courtesy, compassion, fairness and integrity by our church and its representatives or officials, without discrimination on

the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, family or marital status, race, colour, ethnic (or place of) origin, ancestry, disability, creed or social-economic status.

The following guidelines are designed to enhance the sense of dignity, inclusion, and fair treatment, experienced by individuals in their dealings with our church.

Footnote 2

We commend these procedures for implementation at all levels of our church:

1. Transparency of decision making.

Assumptions, expectations, and obligations concerning employees and volunteers within our church must be clear and openly shared. Our church must also work to achieve clarity about the ways in which decisions are reached and carried out.

2. Intentional listening.

When relationships become fractured, our church must provide an appropriate forum in order to ensure that the complainant has the opportunity to be heard when seeking a solution to his or her complaint. Our church must respect and facilitate the individual's opportunities to be heard.

3. Sympathetic Companionship.

We are one body; all are affected when one part is being wounded or destroyed. All issues and situations have an impact on the community as a whole. Therefore, systems must be in place to offer support and companionship to those who are wounded.

4. Clear and prescribed avenues for challenging decisions.

In responding to those who feel wronged or wounded, we should keep in mind what Jesus taught his disciples. In addressing conflict within the Church, Jesus highlights the importance of beginning with face to face encounter and hearing the evidence. If this is unsuccessful, a wider group is involved. Only as a last resort is the whole community engaged and the breaking of fellowship entertained. (Matthew 18: 15-17)

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Bearing in mind this teaching of Jesus, clearly prescribed guidelines for hearing grievances must be available at all levels of our church, so that due process is always observed.

[Footnote] 3 Each parish and diocese will establish, review and make known such a process, the details of which may vary depending on the unique circumstances within each region. Such a process should consider:

- Opportunities for hearing grievances.
- A clear complaints procedure.
- Opportunities for mediation.
- An impartial complaints committee.
- Availability of ombudsperson(s).
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5. Assurance of response.

Such a process will offer assurance of timely response to all legitimate complaints with a commitment to a clearly expressed outcome from those in a position to effect an outcome, such as apology, face to face meeting, or severance.

6. Accessibility.

This process is to be known, available, accessible and affordable throughout all levels of our church.

Our church must ensure that individuals responsible for creating and facilitating such a process will receive adequate training. The commitment of time, human resources, and expertise will reflect our church's acknowledgement of the continued need for healing.

With this affirmation and the suggested guidelines in mind, we join hands and continue on our journey. We know that all within Christ's body have been welcomed by God.

We accept the daunting challenges which lie ahead and are sustained by the Holy Spirit living within us. Therefore we step out as a church with commitment to express dignity and fair treatment for all.

Footnote 1. The rite for Holy Baptism, Book of Alternative Services, p. 158-9.

Footnote 2. Mission Statement of the Anglican Church of Canada 1997

Footnote 3. Refer to the Principles of Natural Justice on Canon 18, Part 5,
Handbook of General Synod, 2002, p.86

1998 – House of Bishops Guidelines on Ordination of Gay and Lesbian Persons, And The Blessing of Covenanted Relationships

That this General Synod commend the House of Bishops for its statement "Human Sexuality" issued on October 29, 1997, and acknowledges the need for continuing study and dialogue.

GS 1995 – Affirm Presence of Gay/Lesbian Christians in the Life of the Church

That this General Synod affirms the presence and contributions of gay men and lesbians in the life of the church and condemns bigotry, violence and hatred directed toward any due to their sexual orientation.

GS 1995 – Continuing Dialogue on Homosexuality and Homosexual Relations

That this General Synod

- encourage parishes and dioceses to continue, deepen, extend and adapt the learning, reflection and dialogue identified by the Task Force on Homosexuality and Homosexual Relationships (as reflected in Recommendations 1 through 4 of the Task Force Report).
- encourage parishes and dioceses to give particular attention to the ongoing dialogue with respect to the issues identified in Recommendation 5 of the Task Force Report.
- encourage parishes and dioceses to develop plans of action to further the dialogue as described in the Recommendations of the Task Force Report.
- request the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee to make provision for leadership to ensure that this process continues at the parish and diocesan levels and that a report be made at the next General Synod

Council of General Synod 1998 – Bigotry and Hatred of Gays and Lesbians

That the Council of General Synod:

- a) make public its reaffirmation of the motion adopted at the 1995 General Synod "affirming the presence and contributions of gay men and lesbians in the life of the Church and condemning bigotry, violence and hatred directed toward any due to their sexual orientation"; and
- b) request the dioceses to monitor the situations in their jurisdictions and seek to find ways to contribute to an atmosphere of respect and a reduction of violence based on bigotry and hatred.

Council of General Synod 1997 – Report of the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee – Sexuality

That the Council of the General Synod invite the dioceses to expand and deepen the dialogue concerning human sexuality through the establishment of a Commission in each diocese or group of dioceses with the following mandate:

- 1. To establish a forum where conversation on human sexuality can be carried on in an atmosphere of trust and respect.
- 2. To represent the diversity of attitude within the Church.
- 3. To consider the full range of expressions of human sexuality in relationship and the church's response to those expressions.
- 4. To receive and respond to materials for study in this area and, where possible, to use local expertise and produce resources which could be shared with the wider church.
- 5. To forward the name of a contact person (or persons) to the FWMC by November 1, 1997, and subsequently forward any responses or new materials which the Commission wishes to share.