

The Joint Commission on The Church in Metropolitan Areas

Members:

- The Rt. Rev. James W. Montgomery, 1982, *Chairman*
- The Rt. Rev. Paul Moore, Jr., 1979
- The Rt. Rev. Joseph T. Hiestand, 1985
- The Rev. Michael S. Kendall, 1985
- The Rev. Canon Nicholas Kouletsis, 1982
- The Rev. Canon St. Julian A. Simpkins, Jr., 1979
- The Hon. Clay Myers, 1985
- Mr. Marcus A. Cummings, 1982
- Mrs. Dorothy Triplett, 1979, *Secretary*

The Joint Commission was originally set up following the General Convention of 1973. For various reasons it was inoperative during that Triennium and was reconstituted in 1976.

Five meetings have been held: February 15-16, 1977, Four Horsemen Motel, Rosemont, Illinois; September 14-15, 1977, Cathedral House, New York, New York; September 18-19, 1978, Diocesan Center, Chicago, Illinois; November 28-29, 1978, Seamen's Church Institute, New York, New York; February 1, 1979, Seamen's Church Institute, New York, New York.

The Rev. Richard Gary, National Missions Officer on the staff at the Episcopal Church Center, has attended our meetings as a consultant and liaison.

The Rev. Canon Sanford D. Smith served as a co-opted advisory member of the Commission.

We are also grateful for the presence at several meetings of Dr. Charles Lawrence, President of the House of Deputies, and the Rev. Dr. James R. Gundrum, Executive Officer of the General Convention. Their counsel and advice have been invaluable.

The long-range goal established by General Convention was to develop recommendations and strategies which will be of concrete assistance to the Church in metropolitan areas in shaping new patterns of mission. This we would see as continuing to be our overall mandate.

In addition, our short-term objective was to "implement the establishment of an Urban Coalition and to serve as an official Church body in bringing the work and plans of several independent agencies and groups to the attention of the National Church."

The Urban Coalition is almost a reality and the Commission expects to work closely with it in its formative stages.

Our objectives and accompanying budgetary requests for the next triennium are as follows:

- 1980— To gather with various ad hoc and urban-concerned groups in order to coordinate and help frame national and on-going programs around the Church's mission in the city. This builds on a program which we have established in the present Triennium in which consultation was held with all groups, official and unofficial, concerned with urban mission. Utilizing this experience we hope to have specific program suggestions for the whole Church.

Budget: Administrative expense	\$250.00
Two meetings of Commission —	
Travel \$3,600.00 per meeting; per diem \$1,600.00 per meeting	10,400.00
One meeting of Executive Committee	
Travel \$900.00; per diem 200.00	1,100.00
	\$11,750.00

METROPOLITAN AREAS

1981— Objective I - to meet with urban-concerned groups and evaluate over-all positions and achievements. This particular thrust this year would be the pursuit of the ecumenical aspects in urban mission, with our second objective to be the discovering of those areas where cooperation between commissions might develop and lead toward shared goals of Christian response to the urban crisis.

Budget: Administrative expense	\$250.00
Two meetings of Commission —	
Travel \$3,600.00 per meeting; per diem \$1,600 per meeting	10,400.00
One meeting of Executive Committee	1,100.00
Travel \$900.00; per diem \$200.00	1,100.00
	\$11,750.00

1982 — Objective I. To meet again with various organizations within the Episcopal Church concerned with urban mission; to re-evaluate, re-plan where necessary, finish programs begun in Triennium, offer guidance to interest groups and Executive Council on successes and failures.

Objective II. To make an impact on seminary curriculum, conferring with deans, faculty, students, trustees, etc., regarding the Church's need to teach theology and practicum of urban mission as vital to the ministry of this Church.

Budget: Administrative expense	\$ 100.00
One meeting of Commission — Travel \$3,600.00; per diem \$1,600.00	5,200.00
One meeting of Executive Committee — Travel \$900.00; per diem \$200.00	1,100.00
	\$6,400.00
Total for Triennium	\$29,900.00

In the Episcopal Church we are attempting to respond to people's yearning for freedom all over the world. For us, the concern is freedom in Christ as life is lived out in our American cities and other areas of poverty and disadvantage.

Hispanics, Asians, Blacks, American Indians and others are the ones who now suffer and are at the heart of the realization that the crisis in our cities stifles freedom and life, as it once did for other ethnics in our history. We now re-affirm our support for the development and fostering of vocations, and the support and training of lay and ordained ministries within these communities.

It is clearly the responsibility of the Church — as we learned from the Urban Bishop's Coalition National Hearings (*cf. To Hear and To Heed*) — to stand as advocate, to stand with those who suffer most. Urban suffering affects individuals. The sense of "urban crisis" can too often be traced to the perennial evil of racism in our land. The end result of this racism is suffering for people; and it is against this that the Church must stand with and for those who are suffering.

As we look toward the decade of the eighties, we must be prepared to build on what we have learned in the decades past, and look toward new beginnings in the remaining years of *this* century.

We affirm those national ministries and agencies, including The Coalition For Human Need and The Ethnic Ministries which first assist the local congregations to continue in faithful ministry, and those agencies which minister at a level and place a congregation cannot reach; and recommend that all efforts of funding/strategy for mission other than these be directed to local congregations to enable an efficient and faithful witness to the Gospel.

Resolution #A—63

Whereas, our Lord commends the Church "to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release for prisoners, and recovery of sight to the blind; to let the broken victims go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor"; and

Whereas, a major crisis afflicts our whole society, the symptoms of which are most clearly seen in areas of urban and rural poverty; and

Whereas, most congregations in these areas are in a crisis of survival, yet are in strategic positions for mission; and

APPENDICES

Whereas, an effective congregation is a key factor in the renewal of community in these areas of deprivation; and

Whereas, many Episcopal congregations, willing, to serve this mission, cannot do so alone; and

Whereas, the Episcopal congregations and dioceses are now far more ready to serve the communities than some once were, and we owe to the Church of the future sustained and strengthened stewardship in these places, so that mission and ministry may continue in the years to come; now therefore, be it

Resolved; the House of _____ concurring,

1. That the Church in its next triennium, set as its prime mission goal a strengthened Christian presence in the cities and other areas of deprivation;

2. That we re-affirm and enable the local congregations as the *locus* of missions for evangelism, ministry and Christian social action. This would mean that all funding for social programs would be directed to assisting the mission of such churches, and that money presently used for other social programs be diverted to this mission so that our congregations may become advocates for social action and social service for the Church. The exception to this would be those ministries that reach into areas that the congregations cannot reach;

3. That this Convention shall call upon its Executive Council, all provinces, dioceses and congregations to join in a new commitment to mission to and advocacy for those whose needs are greatest; and

4. That the Church at all of these levels, including VIM, scrutinize and place a first claim on its financial resources to fulfill this Divine imperative.

Resolution #A—64

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the sum of \$29,900 be appropriated from the General Convention Assessment Budget for 1980-82 for the purposes described in the report of the Commission Assessment Budget for 1980-82 for the purposes described in the report of the Commission under the section of Goals and Objectives.

Resolution #A—65

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the Joint Commission on Metropolitan Areas be appointed to report to the next General Convention, consisting of three bishops, three presbyters and six laity; and that its major responsibility be to develop recommendations and strategies which will be of concrete assistance to the Church in metropolitan areas in shaping new patterns of mission and ministry.