

## STANDING COMMISSION ON STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

[www.episcopalchurch.org/gc/ccab/scsd/default.html](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/gc/ccab/scsd/default.html)

### Membership

Mr. Thomas R. Gossen, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Kansas, 2003
The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley, Jr., <i>Co-Chair</i>	Alabama, 2003,
Ms. Susan T. Erdey, <i>Secretary</i>	New York, 2006
The Rev. Richard J. Aguilar	West Texas, 2003
Mr. Eugene T. Chrostowski	West Missouri, 2003
Canon Sharon L. Davenport	Northwestern Pennsylvania, 2006
The Very Rev. Dr. W. Richard Hamlin	Central New York, 2006
Ms. Marissa Jennings	North Carolina, 2006
Mrs. Joan O. Kline	Southwest Florida, 2003
Ms. Blanca Rivera	Milwaukee, 2006
The Rt. Rev. Gordon Paul Scruton	Western Massachusetts, 2006
Mr. Walter Virden III	Fort Worth, 2003
The Rev. Barnum McCarty	<i>Executive Council liaison</i>
Ms. Terry Parsons	<i>Staff liaison, Stewardship and Discipleship Missioner</i> <i>Episcopal Church Center</i>

### CHARGE

Title I, Canon 1.2 (n) (9) calls for:

A Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development (SCSD), consisting of 12 members (2 Bishops, 2 Priests and/or Deacons, and 8 Lay Persons). It shall be the duty of the Commission to hold up before the Church the responsibility of faithful stewardship of time, talent and treasure in grateful thanksgiving for God's gifts. It shall recommend strategies for stewardship education throughout the Church with special sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic diversity of our Church. It shall recommend programs for long-range planning and development, ensuring that other Church bodies, including the Executive Council, are part of the process. It shall assure that there is an official, periodic gathering, interpretation, evaluation and reporting of stewardship from throughout the Church. It shall help coordinate all church-wide fund-raising activities.

### MEETINGS

The Commission met four times during the triennium: March 22-24, 2001, Episcopal Church Center, New York, NY; November 12-14, 2001, Dallas, TX; March 19-22, 2002, Ellenton, FL; November 14-16, 2002, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA.

### RESPONSE TO 2000 GENERAL CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS

The full commission made the following disposition of the work committed to it by the action of the 73rd General Convention:

1. **A106:** Affirmation of the Tithe and Stewardship Statement. The commission notes that God has been working on this at least since the time of Jacob (Genesis 28:22) and Malachi (Malachi 3:8-10), and so shall we. We continue to develop ways to hold up for our church the tithe (10%) as the minimum standard for Christian giving.
2. **A111:** Legacy Stewardship. See our comments on the teaching and development of Legacy Stewardship below.
3. **A112:** Christian Stewardship Curriculum in Seminaries. A survey of the seminaries is in process and our work in this area will continue into the next Triennium.
4. **A113:** 1% Support to Seminaries by Congregations. We ask all deputies to affirm this important funding stream for our Episcopal seminaries in your annual diocesan conventions.

## WORK SUMMARY

### *Introduction*

The Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development (SCSD) believes the ministry of Christian stewardship is about the joyful transformation of hearts, minds, and spirits. In the Gospel, Christ issues an urgent call to turn ourselves from a life of sinful self-centeredness so that we might begin life renewed as people of God. This call is to a life of on-going conversion, transformation, and challenge as we seek to be stewards of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, stewards of God's gifts, and stewards of all creation.

A lay participant in a regional stewardship event once said, "I used to give so that I would be saved, but through my journey toward tithing I have learned that I have been saved so that I can give." We believe that stewardship so understood lies at the core of our corporate call as Christ's Body, the Church, to become *missio Dei*, God's missional church. God's mission has a church. We are it. The Biblical discipline of the tithe, returning to God 10% of all God gives us from the first fruits of our labors, is an important way of becoming and sustaining God's missional church. According to the gifts we are given, we are called to continue Christ's work of reconciliation in the world.

We recognize a deep chasm between our stated norms and our corporate and individual practice. The average pledge (Year 2000) throughout all 100 dioceses is \$1,564, with the lowest diocesan average \$895, and the highest \$2,406. (Please see charts posted at [www.tens.org/SCSD/Parochial-Report.html](http://www.tens.org/SCSD/Parochial-Report.html) for full details.) Further, between 1969 and 1998, giving in American churches has not kept pace with increases in income. While U.S. per capita disposable income increased during that period by 91% (from \$11,864 to \$22,637), giving as a percentage of income declined 19% (from 3.1% to 2.42%). These statistics suggest we have a long way to go to becoming a missional church that tithes. Similarly, 37 of 100 Episcopal dioceses still give less than the full asking to support the mission and ministry of the whole church. In response to these trends we must remain vigilant in our canonical task to invite the whole church to enter into a life of continued and joyful transformation of hearts, minds, and spirits so that together we might build God's church.

### *Stewardship Defined*

The theology of Christian stewardship concerns our core belief that God has created us *imago Dei*, in God's image, and that as such "God has given the whole world into our care so that we might rule and serve all God's creatures," the world and everything therein.

Our Christian understanding of what it means to be *imago Dei* is informed in part by our Lord's own words in John 3:16: "God so loved the world that God gave..." That is, our God is a God who loves and who gives. What God loves is "the world." We are created to be like God in our loving and in our giving. Christ Jesus lived among us, died, and was raised from the dead to draw us away from a life of sinful self-centeredness and deeper into a discovery of what it means to be *imago Dei*.

"And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, Christ sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all." The Spirit is Christ's own tithe, his own first gift from the first fruits of his incarnation, which embodies the life-giving essence to sustain our new life as *imago Dei*.

William Countryman in his *Good News of Jesus* (Cowley, 1993: p. 105) reminds us that since the earliest witness, the church has always believed that the Spirit provides for all its needs. The Spirit does so, however, in a peculiar manner. The gifts you need, the Spirit gives to someone else. The gifts you are given are meant for others. The Christian community can live only by the sharing of these gifts (I Corinthians 12-14).

Christian stewardship is our **joyful** response to the magnitude of God's love revealed in this most intrinsic aspect of human nature: the giving and sharing of gifts.

Stewardship is the **intentional** choice to shape our lives, both individually and corporately as his Body, the church, in such ways so as to be **transformed** into people of God who daily take the **risk** to live lives of loving and giving for the spread of God's kingdom. Such shaping of our lives comes from our **intentional** living-out of the promises we make and continually renew in our Baptism.

It is our experience, and the witness of all the saints who have come before us, that a life of stewardship so understood has the power to **transform** the life of the giver as well as the lives of the recipients of our gifts. And it is our experience that those congregations and dioceses where an **intentional** choice is made to live such an understanding of Christian stewardship become centers transformed into a **missional** church which indeed lives no longer for itself, but for him who died and rose for us.

There can be no doubt that after the events that have transpired in our national life and the life of the world since this church last met in General Convention, there is a fresh *urgency* for us, as a people of God, to embrace such an understanding of Christian stewardship. For our sake, and for the sake of the world our Lord loved and for which he gave his life, we need to continually find new ways to respond to our call to be a missional church.

### ***The Alleluia Fund – Build My Church***

Living in this new post-September 11, 2001, world, the SCSD recognizes the urgency for the church to awaken as a major agency for God’s transforming love and giving that we might be a witness to a greater sense of security than the world can give. In its 73rd General Convention, the Episcopal Church affirmed the Alleluia Fund initiative. In partnership with the 20/20 movement, the SCSD offers the Alleluia Fund initiative as a significant funding stream for the realization of the goals and objectives of 20/20.

In December 2002, every bishop in the church received a copy of Alleluia Fund: A Guide for Dioceses and Congregations. The Alleluia Fund is designed as an annual diocesan campaign during the Great Fifty Days of Easter. Each household in the church is invited to make daily contributions to the Alleluia Fund for fifty days to be used by the diocese to fund new mission initiatives.

The guide outlines a four phase process to initiate the Alleluia Fund in your diocese: 1) Create the Vision (four methods of doing this are outlined), 2) Live into the Vision (What will we do with the money?), 3) Fund the Vision (Inviting gifts) and 4) Ways to Give. The guide also includes appendices suggesting resources and computer software to facilitate running the annual Alleluia Fund campaign in your diocese.

Running the Alleluia Fund for a period of 20 years gives it the capacity to be a cornerstone funding stream for 20/20. The Alleluia Fund also possesses the potential to be creative and fun in building our funding structures for 20/20 and all special diocesan mission initiatives. Although the money ordinarily is to remain in the diocese, exciting possibilities exist to partner with other domestic and foreign dioceses.

As of this report, several dioceses have already started Alleluia Funds during the Great Fifty Days of Easter. They bear witness to the fact that the Alleluia Fund is already building God’s Church and reaching beyond the church and into the world. The Office of Stewardship is the source for more information and support materials to initiate your diocese’s own Alleluia Fund.

### ***Stewardship Stories and Prayers***

During the past triennium the Commission collected stewardship stories and prayers from throughout the church. These have been published as Faces of Faith: A Steward’s Book of Prayers, available to bishops and deputies at this convention. More copies can be obtained through [Episcopal Parish Services](#) or the [Office of Stewardship](#).

### ***Holy Habits***

We understand God’s invitation to be faithful stewards as a call to a lifelong journey of repentance, conversion, and renewed life. God calls us to grow into the *imago Dei* that we are created to be. Often, faithful response will require us to make choices that challenge our culture’s obsessions with scarcity, self-sufficiency, and acquisitiveness.

We are called to be stewards of our faith, of creation, of civil society, and of our lives. None of this comes naturally; it requires both faith and commitment, and so the church has developed a number of practices and disciplines—or holy habits—to help us on our journey. All of these find expression in our baptismal vows.

At the center of our individual and corporate lives is the call to be stewards of the Gospel. We are called not just to live our faith in Jesus Christ, but also to proclaim that faith by word and example. This finds expression in the way we work, pray, and give.

We are entrusted with the stewardship of creation. This means we must reflect on our use of resources and on what it means to have been given the care of the whole world and charged to rule and serve all God's creatures. The baptismal promise to strive for justice and peace impels us to be actively involved as citizens of our communities, nation, and world.

To live as Christian stewards is to be intentional in our use of all that God has given us. Certainly that includes the first-fruits tithing of our material wealth as a reminder and symbol of our thankful acknowledgement of God as the gracious source of all and as a way to begin dealing with our addiction to money. It also includes the discernment, cultivation and use of our skills and abilities to further God's work in the world, the *missio Dei*. Because our gifts differ, and because we sometime find it difficult to recognize and develop our own God-given giftedness, our baptism grafts us into the body of Christ. We are to recognize the *imago Dei* within ourselves and within every human being.

One of the great stewardship challenges of our age is our stewardship of time. We live in a culture that offers nearly infinite diversions and demands that we fill every moment with activity. There is no greater need, and nothing more counter-cultural, than for us to reclaim Sabbath time. Not only is the commandment for Sabbath time the second-longest of the ten; Sabbath is part of the order of Creation—it is the very culmination of Creation. As the church—and as dioceses, parishes, and individuals—it is imperative that we find ways to teach the absolute necessity of Sabbath as part of individual spiritual life, and that we encourage and enable our bishops and clergy to model the balance of activity and Sabbath.

### ***Theology of Legacy Stewardship***

Christian stewardship is rooted in the conviction of faith that all we are and all we have is God's gracious gift. Christians believe, as Archbishop Michael Ramsey once wrote, that "I come from God, I belong to God, I go to God."

We are stewards of the whole of our lives. The joyful work of Christian stewardship is to be applied not only to our annual giving, but also to giving at the end of our lives. It is important that God's people offer a faithful portion of our accumulated resources for the work of the church and the mission of God. Giving a faithful percentage of our resources through our wills or living trusts, through planned gifts such as charitable remainder trusts, and other special gifts from our abundance are ways to accomplish such "legacy stewardship." Such legacy giving bears final witness to our Christian faith and helps strengthen the church's future mission. Gifts at the end of our lives express our gratitude for the whole of our lives.

It is imperative the dioceses and parishes of this church teach legacy stewardship and provide ways and means for the receiving and securing of such gifts. The Episcopal Church Foundation is an excellent resource, providing teaching and a secure trust for legacy gifts. Endowments can be a vital source for mission, but should be structured in a way that prevents dependence on their income for annual operations. Further, it is incumbent upon the clergy and lay leaders of our parishes to encourage all faithful people to make wills and offer a percentage of their accumulated resources for the church's mission from generation to generation.

### ***EFT and Online Giving***

Time was spent investigating forms of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) as a method for paying one's pledge. The principal methods would be a direct transfer arranged from one's bank account to the parish account (including online services), or the use of credit cards. Denominations and parishes that offer EFT as a pledge payment option report more predictable and even cash flow throughout the year, as well as an increase in giving (since most people who give by EFT also put cash in the plate on Sunday morning). Possible negative issues revolve around the use of credit cards, which could be seen as encouraging debt to pay one's pledge. Both EFT and credit card payments involve some sort of service fee that may be incurred by the church or passed on to the individual. The Commission stresses that this is simply one of a variety of collection methods and is not related to any theology of giving. Although we are not prepared to make any recommendation at

this time, we encourage parishes and dioceses that may use EFT as a method of collection to send this Commission detailed reports of your experiences.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS AND BEYOND**

During the next triennium the Commission will:

- Continue to urge dioceses to implement The Alleluia Fund.
- Look into new models of mission funding.
- Continue our research into the role of stewardship education in clergy formation at our church’s seminaries, and seek to determine effective models for preparing future clergy to fulfill their canonical duty to teach the Biblical standard of the tithe for financial stewardship (Title III, Canon 14, Sec. 2 (a)).
- Seek to hold several of our five meetings at seminaries of this church to engage students in conversation about clergy, money and stewardship.
- Encourage the development of teaching materials and opportunities for stewardship education, which appropriately reflect the diversity of this church.
- Continue to encourage the teaching of holy habits (tithing, prayer, Sabbath time), the development of stewardship statements at all dimensions of our church’s life, and the telling of our stewardship stories.

**RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution A134 Implement Alleluia Fund**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 74th General Convention commend those dioceses  
2 that have already implemented Resolution A036 of the 73rd General Convention, The Alleluia Fund —  
3 Build My Church; and be it further  
4 *Resolved*, That all dioceses be encouraged to engage in this process of planning, giving, and spiritual  
5 transformation as a part of their 20/20 initiative in order to develop and maintain relationships with  
6 individual members of their dioceses and to fund new mission opportunities; and be it further  
7 *Resolved*, That all dioceses are encouraged to designate a tithe of their Alleluia Fund offerings to mission  
8 beyond the diocese.

**Resolution A135 Holy Habits**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That in recognition of the church’s tradition of calling us to  
2 work, pray, and give for the spread of God’s kingdom, all members of the Episcopal Church be  
3 encouraged to develop a personal spiritual discipline that includes, at a minimum, the holy habits of  
4 tithing, daily personal prayer and study, Sabbath time, and regular corporate worship; and be it further  
5 *Resolved*, That the Bishops and Deputies of this 74th General Convention be given an opportunity to sign  
6 the following declaration:  
7 As Christian stewards and leaders of the Episcopal Church, we affirm that we are tithing, or have  
8 adopted a plan to work toward tithing; and that, if we are not already doing so, we are committed to  
9 give priority to corporate worship, personal daily prayer and study, and Sabbath time in our own lives;  
10 and we invite all members of the Episcopal Church to join us in these holy habits;  
11 and be it further  
12 *Resolved*, That the Secretary publish a list of these signatories in the Journal of the 74th General  
13 Convention and provide the same to *Episcopal Life* for publication of the statement and the list of  
14 signatories.

**Resolution A136 National Mission Narrative/Annual Report**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 74th General Convention direct the Episcopal Church  
2 Center staff to develop, produce, publish, and distribute to the Episcopal Church at large an annual report  
3 that describes, in word and image, the good works that are being accomplished throughout our church in  
4 this country and in the world.

## EXPLANATION

The Episcopal Church has a powerful story and witness that should be shared widely. The Journal of General Convention, while comprehensive, does not effectively convey the vibrancy of the ministries that are being accomplished every day; furthermore, it is published only once every three years. Too few Episcopalians are aware of the breadth and scope of churchwide mission and ministry opportunities and accomplishments. An annual report that presents facts, figures, and information in a visual and compelling form will help tell the story of the Episcopal Church in a way that will engage and excite our own members and those who do not yet know about the Church. Such a report can be a powerful tool for evangelism and outreach. The ELCA department of stewardship provides an excellent model for this report.

**Resolution A137 Accountability Of Mission Partners**

1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 74th General Convention require that recipients of  
2 grants or gifts from the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society maintain appropriate accounting records  
3 and controls over such grants and gifts.

## EXPLANATION

Incidents of irregularities and abuses in administration of certain gifts have been reported in recent years. Good stewardship requires that we be accountable for all God's gifts.

**Resolution A138 50/50 Outreach for Congregations**

1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 74th General Convention urge congregations to adopt  
2 the principle of devoting as much of their resources of time, talent, and treasure outside of the  
3 congregation as on itself. Part of the 50/50 sharing should include adoption of the 1% giving to seminaries,  
4 the .7% giving to international development programs that address root causes of ill health, illiteracy, and  
5 economic justice, and other worthwhile causes.

## EXPLANATION

We are the children of God, and we are invited to respond to God's abundance by being joyful givers. In every aspect of our life, we are entrusted to be stewards of God's creation. God invites us to give freely and to exercise joyfully our gifts through mission and ministries. Adoption of the 50/50 principle is a means of demonstrating our commitment to engaging in God's mission to reconcile, restore, rebuild, and reconnect.

**Resolution A139 Affirm the Work of TENS**

1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That this 74th General Convention commend the transforming  
2 ministry of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship (TENS), a ministry that invites individuals,  
3 congregations, and dioceses to grow into a new understanding of Christian stewardship theology that  
4 transforms us from selfishness and fear to love and giving, and we invite all dioceses and congregations to  
5 become members of TENS not only to support this important ministry but also to receive the many  
6 resources TENS is developing and making available to the church.

## EXPLANATION

The Episcopal Network for Stewardship is a voluntary network of people who understand the important role of leadership in calling the Church to a faithful response to God's call to share generously of our time, talents, and treasures to provide for God's work in the world. The purpose of TENS is to lead in the growth of a network of dedicated stewardship ministers serving congregations and dioceses; and to support each other with personal consultations and fellowship opportunities, as well as print, video, and electronic resources.

For further information, contact The Episcopal Network for Stewardship by telephone at 800.699.2669 or 316.686.0470; FAX to 316.686.9201; or e-mail to [tens@tens.org](mailto:tens@tens.org). Information is also available online at [www.tens.org](http://www.tens.org).

**Resolution A140 Mission Funding**

- 1     *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 74th General Convention direct:  
2     • the beginning of a discernment process for a church-wide major mission funding effort; and  
3     • the immediate creation of a Mission Funding Office for the Episcopal Church, grounded in the  
4     stewardship theology of this church.

**EXPLANATION**

The Episcopal Church can and needs to raise large sums of money for mission. We believe there are major gifts for mission that parish and diocesan funding efforts do not challenge. We recognize that in addition to the missional initiatives emerging from the 20/20 movement, there are many efforts within the church that need to be coordinated in seeking new funds, such as an Episcopal Relief and Development endowment, Episcopal Church Foundation planned giving initiatives, Alleluia Fund — Build My Church, overseas mission, and diocesan and congregational capital fund drives. We know that this effort requires professional expertise.

**BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR SCSD**

The Standing Commission for Stewardship and Development will hold five (5) meetings in the next triennium (Jan 21-24, 2004, June 2004, November 2004, March 2005, November 2005) for a cost of \$67,500.

**SUMMARY**

The Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development submits this report to the 74th General Convention to encourage the joyful transformation of hearts, minds, and spirits, to discover and embrace what it means individually to be created *imago Dei*, and as congregations and dioceses to become intentional centers for *missio Dei*, recognizing that God’s mission has a church. This is what we are called to be: God’s missional church.