

# The Committee on the State of the Church

Your Committee begs leave to submit its report to the House of Deputies of the 1976 General Convention.

At the threshold we celebrate the faith, the works and the person of John Paul Causey, sometime Chariman of the Committee who died in a plane crash in Bali on April 27, 1974.

This report is cast in four sections. The first touches on the transmission of the customary statistical data. The second contains observations and comments with reference to the role of the Committee, with a recommended charge to the Committee for the next triennium. The third reports briefly with respect to the functioning of the members of the Committee as a Council of Advice to the President of the House. In the last section is set forth the requested budget of the Committee for the next triennium.

## I – Statistical Data

As has been the practice in the past, the Committee transmits certain statistical data with reference to our Church, drawn largely from the parochial and diocesan reports. (Appendix A.) The items included and the form of collation are the same as reported to the House of Deputies of prior General Conventions in recent years.

Our review of these data persuades us that we should indicate our own reservations as to both their reliability and their completeness. We are persuaded that because of imprecision in some of the terminology used (e.g., “communicant”), lack of careful attention and assiduity in the reporting of facts at both parish and diocesan levels, and the incompleteness of data reported, we cannot represent that these are hard, scientifically impervious statistical data. Nor are we convinced that the information solicited and compiled is necessarily that most revealing or useful as a basis for appraising the current state of our Church. In thus uttering a caution as to the quality of the data, we do not in any way suggest that there has been negligence or oversight in collection or assembly nor do we wish otherwise to be understood as impugning those whose industry and care have enabled us to furnish the statistics which we do.

Because we believe that there may be more indicative information feasibly to be had and that more reliable reporting procedures may be designed, we have presumed to address a special communication to the Executive Council. Subject to the approval of our Committee, the Council is charged by canon with responsibility for the preparation of the form of parochial and diocesan reports which provide the source for the statistical data (Canon I.5.1 and 2). We have requested the Council to review the present reporting forms and procedures with a view to their modification or to the adoption of new forms and procedures, or both, to the end that more reliable and useful data may be made readily available to the Church at large at an acceptable cost. A copy of our memorandum to the Executive Council accompanies this report as Appendix B.

## II – The Role of the Committee

When General Convention was established at the end of the 18th century the deputies perceived a need for a committee to assess the state of the Church, to remind the Church of its mission, and to report on necessary internal and procedural matters. Initially the Committee set the agenda for Convention identifying issues and suggesting positions and actions or recommending directions. When agreed on by the House of Deputies the report of the Committee on the State

of the Church was transmitted to the House of Bishops for its consideration in the preparation of its Pastoral Letter (cf. Canon I.5.3[b]). The function of the Committee has obviously changed over the intervening decades. In recent triennia the only action of the Committee has been to serve as the agency for the transmittal of statistical data.

We recognize the plurality which flourishes within our Church today. Hence we have no expectation that it will be possible to produce a definitive report on the state of the Church or indeed any document which, in subject matter included and excluded and in balance of emphasis and treatment, will meet universal approval. Nonetheless we think that there is occasion for the submission to each General Convention of a report which undertakes to assess both the current state of our Church's vitality and to estimate its potential for the years just ahead as perceived by a representative and responsible Committee of the members of the House of Deputies. We refer to the health of the Church both as an institution and in its capacity to minister to the concerns and needs of people both within and outside its membership.

The preparation of such a report if it is to be both reliable and useful will not be easy. In part its comments and conclusions can be based on statistical data, but it should not stop there. Its predicate must be far broader than that. We do not necessarily envision the preparation of a broadly comprehensive report for each General Convention. An incisive, sensitive development of issues of selective significance may be preferable in some instances. It remains to be determined, therefore, just what items of information and opinion should be obtained, and by what means. These desiderata may themselves differ from one triennium to another.

In our preliminary consideration we have thought of various approaches which should be explored. It is suggested for example that efforts might be made, perhaps on a provincial basis, by examination of the addresses of the bishops at annual diocesan conventions, of the annual reports of Standing Committees, and of other diocesan or synodical materials, to discern the existence of movements or enterprises materially affecting the faith, life and work of the Church. By way of illustration only we list the following:

- quantum and level of spiritual vitality, of evangelistic effort;
- the quantum and quality of retreat and renewal activity;
- specific educational activities, biblical, liturgical, ministerial;
- ecumenical involvement in parish and diocese;
- community participation, both in parish and diocese;
- distribution of our constituencies, of the older and the younger, of minority groups, of urban and rural congregations;
- shifts in our groupings, of parishes closed or merged, of economic and geographical distribution;
- the extent and quality of support for overseas activities.

Certain items of the source material must be solicited church-wide. Some may usefully be channeled through diocese and province. Some may come from the institutional structures of the Church; some from special interest groups. For purposes of valid comparison certain data should remain the same from one triennium to the next. Each Committee, however, should have both the responsibility and privilege of gathering source material believed useful for the preparation of its particular view of our Church. We believe attempts should be made not only to evaluate the objective activities of the Church; effort should be expended, too, to assess the more intangible senses of well-being or distress which may be found in the Church at large or in significant segments of its lay or clerical membership. It may be possible constructively to describe the impact of controversial issues (for instance, with respect to the triennium just closing, of the

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stimulus or the divisiveness of women's ordination or prayerbook revision).

Because we are convinced that a Report on the State of the Church of this dimension would be useful and constructive we recommend the adoption by the House of Deputies at the 1976 General Convention of a resolution appropriately charging the Committee on the State of the Church for the 1976-1979 Triennium. We believe that advantage lies in the formal assignment of such responsibility by the House. Broad awareness in advance that such a task is to be undertaken should result in the submission to the Committee not only of raw data relevant to the Committee's consideration, but as well of ideas and comment as to content and format of the report. Accordingly we recommend the adoption by the House of Deputies of the 1976 General Convention of the following resolution:

### **Resolution A-32**

*Resolved, that the Committee on the State of the Church of the House of Deputies be instructed, incident to the discharge of its canonical responsibilities, to prepare and submit to the House of Deputies of the 1979 General Convention a Report on the State of the Church assessing, as of the date of the report, the general condition of the Church and its potential for the years immediately following of the sort contemplated in the report of the Committee on the State of the Church made to the House of Deputies of the 1976 General Convention.*

Notably we have thought it premature at this time to suggest formal, structural participation in the preparation of the report of representatives of the House of Bishops. Nothing, of course, will preclude as much and as frequent informal communication with individual bishops and with committees of the House of Bishops as the Committee on the State of the Church may think desirable. We visualize that eventually the quality and the usefulness of such a report will be enhanced by such formal participation on the part of the House of Bishops as that House may determine appropriate.

### **III – Council of Advice**

In the last two triennia the President of the House of Deputies has requested the members of the Committee on the State of the Church to serve as his Council of Advice (cf. Canon I.1.1[b]). Although others, and particularly the President himself, are better qualified to evaluate the usefulness of such an arrangement, we think it has served admirably. Accordingly we presume to suggest that the next President of the House of Deputies consider the continuation of the same arrangement. Recognizing both the need in the composition of the membership of the Committee on the State of the Church for broad representation of the disparate points of view within our Church as well as geographical distribution and the very proper desire of any President to benefit from individual counselors in whom he may impose special confidence, we recommend that if the Committee on the State of the Church is used as the nucleus of the Council on Advice, the new President should feel free, as has the present President, to supplement the membership of the Committee with other individuals of his or her own selection.

### **IV – Budget for the Triennium**

Adequately but frugally to implement the recommendations of this report, we propose the authorization of the following budget for the Committee on the State of the Church for the Triennium 1976-1979.

A. For the Committee to operate and to prepare the proposed report we recommend the following budget, prepared on the assumption that the Committee should be enabled to meet on three occasions and that if its task is effectively to be done it will require the assistance of a limited amount of outside professional consultation:

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### IV – Budget for the Triennium

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#### Committee Budget

Travel and lodging for 21 Committee members for 3 meetings during the Triennium		\$28,980.00
Consultant, half-time for one year:		
Salary	\$15,000.00	
Travel	4,000.00	
Secretary and office	2,000.00	21,000.00
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	Total	\$49,980.00

B. If in addition the members of the Committee are to be requested to serve as Council of Advice to the new President of the House of Deputies, our experience prompts us to recommend the following supplemental authorization:

<b>Council of Advice Budget</b> Travel and lodging for 50 people	
Travel and lodging for 50 people for 3 meetings during the Triennium	\$65,100.00

*Respectfully submitted,*

#### Province 1

The Rev. Gilbert S. Avery, III (Mass.)  
Dr. Charity Waymouth (Maine)

#### Province 2

The Very Rev. Dillard Robinson, III  
(Newark)

The Hon. Hugh R. Jones, *Chairman*,  
(New York)

#### Province 3

The Rev. C. Charles Vache  
(Southern Virginia)

Mr. Richard Taylor (Virginia)

#### Province 4

The Rev. Samuel C.W. Fleming  
(S. Carolina)

Mrs. J. Wilmette Wilson (Georgia)

#### Province 5

The Ven. Irving H. Mayson (Michigan)

The Hon. Chester J. Byrns  
(Western Michigan)

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	<b>Province 6</b>
The Rev. Robert F. Royster (Colorado)	
Mr. Jay Horning (Iowa)	
	<b>Province 7</b>
The Rev. James P. DeWolfe, Jr. (Dallas)	
Mr. William Ikard, II (Rio Grande)	
	<b>Province 8</b>
The Rev. C. Boone Sadler, Jr. (Los Angeles)	
Alvin H. Hambly, M.D. (Northern California)	
	<b>Province 9</b>
The Rev. Onell Soto (El Salvador)	
Mrs. Melchor Saucedo (Western Mexico)	
	<b>Ex Officiis</b>
The Rev. Dr. John B. Coburn, <i>President of the House of Deputies</i>	
The Rev. James R. Gundrum, <i>Secretary, House of Deputies</i>	
Mr. James M. Winning, <i>Parliamentarian</i>	

### APPENDIX A

This statistical data is not complete, but shown here as an example of what is being done.

#### I. PAROCHIAL VITAL STATISTICS

	1973	1974
a. Church Members (all baptized persons)		
Domestic	2,927,842	2,907,293
Overseas	<u>138,302</u>	<u>137,346</u>
Total Church	3,066,144	3,044,639
b. Communicants		
Domestic	2,079,793	2,056,254
Overseas	<u>56,943</u>	<u>60,590</u>
Total Church	2,136,736	2,116,844
c. Households (families + individuals)		
Domestic	1,175,681	1,175,583
Overseas	<u>21,823</u>	<u>32,421</u>
Total Church	1,197,504	1,208,004

#### II. PAROCHIAL FINANCIAL STATISTICS (in Thousands)

Receipts		
For General Purposes		
Domestic	258,574	274,403
Overseas	<u>1,990</u>	<u>1,711</u>
Total Church	260,564	276,114

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<b>For Special Purposes</b>		
Domestic	50,190	51,614
Overseas	<u>297</u>	<u>220</u>
Total Church	50,487	51,834
<b>Total Receipts</b>		
Domestic	308,765	326,018
Overseas	<u>2,288</u>	<u>1,932</u>
Total Church	314,053	327,950
<b>Disbursements</b>		
For work outside the Parishes		
Domestic	50,837	52,206
Overseas	<u>365</u>	<u>296</u>
Total Church	51,202	52,502
For Parish Purposes		
Domestic	256,394	274,630
Overseas	<u>1,950</u>	<u>1,646</u>
Total Church	138,344	276,276
<b>Total Disbursements</b>		
Domestic	307,232	326,837
Overseas	<u>2,316</u>	<u>1,942</u>
Total Church	309,548	328,779

### XI. DIOCESAN VITAL STATISTICS

	1973	1974
a. Total Clergy		
Domestic	11,285	11,605
Overseas	<u>279</u>	<u>380</u>
Total Church	11,564	11,985
b. Non-Parochial Clergy		
Domestic	4,569	4,621
Overseas	<u>130</u>	<u>170</u>
Total	4,699	4,791

### APPENDIX B

#### Memorandum

To: The Executive Council

From: The Committee on the State of the Church of the House of Deputies

Subject: Reporting of Statistical Data

As have our predecessors in recent years, we shall transmit certain statistical data to the 1976 General Convention. We note that the Executive Council and our Committee share responsibility for preparation of the forms of diocesan and parochial reports which to a large extent provide the basis for this statistical data (cf. Canon I.5.1 and 2). We understand, too, that financial pressures have dictated economic stringency in the procedures for the gathering, collation, and reporting of the source material.

We have felt impelled in our report to the House of Deputies of the 1976

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General Convention to express a caveat as to the statistical data which we transmit. Because of imprecision in some of the terminology used (e.g., "communicant"), lack of careful attention and assiduity in the reporting of facts at both parish and diocesan levels, and the incompleteness of data reported, we cannot represent that our report contains hard, scientifically impervious statistical data. Nor are we convinced that the information solicited and compiled is necessarily that most revealing or useful as a basis for appraising the current state of our Church. We have expressly disclaimed any intention, however, to suggest that there has been negligence or oversight in collection or assembly, nor do we wish otherwise to be understood as impugning those whose industry and care have enabled us to furnish the statistics which we do.

Rather we believe that there may be more indicative information feasibly to be had and that more reliable reporting procedures may be designed. With this in mind we request that early in the next triennium formal consideration be given by the Executive Council, in consultation with the Committee on the State of the Church, to a review of the present reporting forms and procedures with a view to their modification or to the adoption of new forms and procedures, or both, to the end that more reliable and useful data may be made readily available to the Church at large at an acceptable cost.

We presume to suggest that the Council's response to this memorandum be addressed to the Chairman of the Committee on the State of the Church of the House of Deputies for the next triennium.