

The Executive Council Report of The Presiding Bishop's Task Force on Christian Education in Congregations

INTRODUCTION: MANDATE, MEMBERSHIP, AND METHODOLOGY

The 68th General Convention directed that a task force on Christian education be created by the Executive Council to study the history and present state of Christian education and to recommend actions to strengthen the Church's educational ministry. The work of the task force was to include: the goals of Christian education; its proper role in the life of parishes and individual Christians; the recruitment, training, and support of educational leadership; the identification of existing and the development of supplemental educational resources for all ages. The findings and recommendations of the task force were to be reported to the 69th General Convention.

The members of the task force, selected and appointed by the Presiding Bishop in March of 1986, represent, collectively, a rich diversity of experience and perspectives. Active as clergy and lay leaders in their local congregations, the task force members also carry out an impressive number of diocesan and national leadership roles within the life of the Church. Diverse racial, ethnic, international, and other perspectives brought by its members have contributed to the inclusiveness and breadth of the task force's approach, conclusions, and recommendations.

Designation as the Presiding Bishop's Task Force on Christian Education in Congregations reflected an ongoing commitment on the part of the task force to the creative potential and ultimate responsibility for educational ministry that belongs to each local church, whatever its size.

The task force gave serious attention to the history of Christian education and, in 1987, published a brief account of one of the peak periods of educational activity under the title, *Christian Education in the Episcopal Church, 1940s to 1970s*. This essay has been widely distributed as an aid to discussion of fundamental questions faced in an earlier era and still relevant today.

In order to obtain information on present practice, a report form was sent to every congregation in August/September 1986. Three thousand replies were received—an exceptionally high rate of response—thus providing data on the size and type of congregation; clergy and lay responsibility for educational ministry; staff training; formal educational opportunities; organizational activities; the main themes or subject matter addressed; and the materials used. Each respondent was invited to address comments to the task force, and many availed themselves of the opportunity to describe both accomplishments and needs.

The task force prepared a draft statement setting forth an initial vision of educational ministry in a local congregation. This statement and a set of questions to elicit other visions, to obtain information regarding educational resources—existing or needed—to discover the critical issues perceived as influencing educational ministry today, and to invite recommendations for the future of Christian education became the

basis for a series of in-depth personal interviews with educators and other leaders at all levels of the Church's life. Fifty individual interviews were carried out, and one hundred and eighty persons participated in six group interviews. Each of the individual and group interviews was written up and studied by all task force members.

Lessons drawn from history, information and comments from the report forms, the holistic vision of Christian education in the local congregation articulated by those interviewed, and the insights of task force members themselves provided the major sources for the first draft of the task force report. In that report, Christian education was defined as an ongoing process, integrated with every aspect of congregational life, in order that the people of God may learn what it means to live the Baptismal Covenant and, thus, to express their unique calling as followers of Jesus Christ in the world. Included also were recommendations for a structured approach to the recruitment, training, and support of mission consultants, leaders, and teachers for educational ministry in congregations as well as recommendations for the selection, development, evaluation, and dissemination of resources.

This draft report was sent to seven congregations located in very diverse communities from the West Coast to the East and designated as "listening posts." Each congregation arranged a meeting to discuss and critique the draft report and recommendations, while a team made up of a representative of the task force, an Executive Council member from the region, and one or more persons with diocesan or provincial educational responsibilities listened. One hundred members of congregations thus critiqued the initial report and recommendations. Other listening posts are being set up.

The methodology used by the task force has enabled approximately 3,400 individuals to influence the report and recommendations directly. These individuals spoke for many others with whom they work in a wide range of ministries. Task force members are deeply grateful to all who communicated so openly their frustrations and dreams, their practical insights and their hope for a renewed focus on the nurture and formation of God's people in local congregations.

The final report and recommendations of the task force seek to honor both the expressed need for a clearer sense of direction based on common principles and guidelines for educational ministry in the Episcopal Church and, also, the need for freedom and self-determination in local congregations that are extremely diverse in size, needs, culture, language, liturgical practice, resources, and ethnic and racial heritage.

The members of the Task Force were:

Dr. Fredrica Harris Thompsett, *Chair*, Cambridge, Massachusetts
The Rev. Nathan D. Baxter, Lancaster, Pennsylvania
The Rev. Locke E. Bowman, Alexandria, Virginia
The Rt. Rev. Rustin Kimsey, The Dalles, Oregon
Dr. Dabney H. Narvaez, Montclair, New Jersey
The Rt. Rev. James Ottley, Balboa, Panama
The Rt. Rev. George L. Reynolds, Nashville, Tennessee
The Rev. Joseph P. Russell, Cleveland, Ohio
Ms. Kathy Tyler Scott, Indianapolis, Indiana
The Rev. Martin Seeley, St. Louis, Missouri
The Rt. Rev. Elliott L. Sorge, Easton, Maryland
The Rev. Sandra Wilson, Asbury Park, New Jersey
The Rev. Wallace Frey, *ex officio*, Dewitt, New York
The Rev. David W. Perry, *Staff* New York, New York
Ms. Dorothy Brittain, *Consultant*, Brewerton, New York
Dr. Carman St. J. Hunter, *Consultant*, Brooklyn, New York

Summary Report of the Task Force Vision and Goals for Christian Education

Christian education is an ongoing process whose purpose is to support the people of God as they seek to live out the Baptismal Covenant and to express their unique calling as followers of Jesus Christ. One of the greatest challenges to the leadership of the Church is the empowerment of all Christians through both formal and informal learning opportunities. It is the responsibility of the leadership in each congregation to establish and to develop an environment which enables people to discover themselves as God's people and to carry out the ministries to which they are called. It is through such vision and leadership that the whole congregation can come to feel its responsibility for community and total ministry within the life of the Church.

Congregations that effectively educate their members convey a clarity of mission; cultivate a shared vision of what the Church is called to be; involve and value all of their members; affirm, celebrate, and utilize their diversity—racially, culturally, and linguistically; enable a strong sense of community centered in God; and balance the nurture of their membership with their ministry in the larger community in which they live and in the world. In such congregations everyone is a learner and is challenged and nurtured through education, worship, liturgy, and action. Members become knowledgeable about the Christian faith and receive spiritual direction and a solid theological grounding through their participation in the sacraments, Bible study, reflection, prayer, and action. These congregations will resemble Paul's description of the church at Corinth.

I continually thank my God for you because of the favor he has bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, in whom you have been richly endowed with every gift of speech and knowledge. Likewise, the witness I bore to Christ has been so confirmed among you that you lack no spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1.4-7).

When the local congregation develops a responsive and clear sense of mission, it can become both an oasis and a catalyst, a place for spiritual replenishment and growth, and a center for outreach and social change. It is a community in which members are helped to integrate Scripture into their understanding of contemporary issues and to ground their action in the new insights they gain. Members of congregations like these are keenly aware that Christ meets them among the struggling peoples of the world (Matthew 25). As a result, they feel a strong sense of relationship and caring for all people. For them the Church exceeds the boundaries of four walls and encompasses their whole life.

The Role of Christian Education in Congregational Life

With these thoughts in mind, it is important that we focus our attention on the entire life of the congregation as the context for education. It is the life lived together as a Christian people in the congregations of our churches that teaches—or fails to teach—the values and direction of the Gospel. How we welcome the stranger, care for the child, settle our differences, and make decisions is an integral part of the Christian education program of the congregation. Moments of focused learning need to be offered so that members of the congregation can make sense of the events of their life together. The goal of these focused events is to help the people see as they have never seen before. Everyone in the congregations is a learner and everyone is a teacher.

In the past, many churches have tended to segment congregational life into specific program areas. We have created programs for stewardship, programs for evangelism, programs for children's education, and programs concerned with social justice issues—hunger and the rights of minorities, for instance. Our efforts in the future need to be directed towards seeing congregational life as “whole cloth.” We need to see the relationships between all aspects of ministry and witness if we are to know the fullness of the Gospel's impact on our lives. As Bishop Browning said in his address to Executive Council in March of 1987:

How do we integrate the many facets of education—education for the purpose of identity, education as consciousness raising, education for problem and issues solving—into a holistic system? . . . What tools are necessary for the Episcopal Church to exercise its education ministry and enable and empower every person for mission?

Concerns Regarding Focus and Leadership for Christian Education

In addition to the emphasis we heard on finding ways to express the ministry and mission of congregations holistically, there were certain other recurring concerns. Perhaps the most important of these was the central importance of biblical literacy. It has often been said that we Christians are a “story-formed people.” Our consciousness and identity grow out of the salvation story as it is contained in Scripture, a story that is recalled each time we gather for Eucharist together. As long as the people of the Church are not intimately familiar with that story, we risk moving through the present with a hazy vision of who we are and where we are going rather than with the clear vision that Scripture provides, a vision of hope for the future and a vision that can lend meaning and direction to the present moment. “Who are we as the people of the Book?” needs to be the question that we ask ourselves as we shape the education programs of the future. We Episcopalians must be literate about the tenets of our faith.

An understanding of who we are as Christians standing in the Anglican tradition was a second concern that emerged from our study. Distinctive Anglican theological perspectives must inform our understanding. Prayer Book literacy and an appreciation of our heritage and polity as Episcopalians are essential ingredients in our educational approach. This in no way denies the call to ecumenism to which we are equally committed. It simply means that if we are to contribute to the ecumenical dialogue we need first to know who we are and what we bring to that dialogue. It means that if we believe Episcopalians have something to contribute to a world seeking God's truth and justice, we must be aware of the heritage that shapes the way we make decisions together, interpret Scripture, face suffering and ambiguity, and witness to a loving God acting in history. Episcopalian Christians, hearing the call to a renewed sense of mission, need to be literate about the foundations of our Anglican heritage just as we need to be literate about Scripture and about the unique Prayer Book that helps us live out and interpret Scripture.

Another area commanding our attention was that of providing skilled leadership for educational ministry. There was a clear demand that the Church nurture and sustain both recognized and potential leadership with particular attention to affirming and supporting leaders from communities and groups often overlooked in the process of leader development in the Church. The need for training models that utilized inclusive, circular, and participatory approaches was stressed as important for the empowerment of leadership in today's Church. It was emphasized that training strategies should enable leaders and teachers to support young persons and children as they seek to live as

followers of Jesus Christ in the face of the crisis of values and the demands of secular society.

The role of seminaries as the training ground for educational ministry was also seen as crucial because the ordained leadership of congregations and dioceses has a determinative influence on the response congregations make to their calling as learning, growing communities of faith. When the priest and the bishop understand and accept appropriate roles as educators, then lay ministers can exercise their ministry as leaders and teachers more effectively.

Further, we heard much about the need for common norms and criteria for educational ministry in the Episcopal Church that could unite us as a church and, also, be sufficiently flexible to allow different traditions and cultural experiences to be expressed. Thus, we were faced with the need for leadership and resources that would be sensitive and responsive to differences yet so firmly centered in Anglican theology and biblical tradition that they could guide Anglican Christians in making their unique response to the challenges of today's world.

Conclusion

Our study has reminded us of who we are as the Episcopal Church. We are a church composed predominantly of small congregations across the country. Therefore, as we think about designing education programs and resources at the national level, we must keep in mind the special needs of small congregations. We are a church with a black presence and heritage representing both Afro-American and Caribbean roots. The influence of Hispanic and Asian-American peoples is also growing in the Church. And Native Americans make important contributions to our understanding of who we are as Episcopalians today. Any educational program we design or produce for the Episcopal Church must take this rich diversity seriously.

Speaking the "mind of the Church" can be a difficult task as we recognize our diversity, but this is not a new phenomenon. Old divisions between "high church" and "low church" were a concern for those who struggled to produce a national curriculum and shape the educational ministry of the Church 30 years ago. Although we sometimes bemoan our theological diversity in the Episcopal Church, it is our prayer that rather than seeing our differences as barriers we will see them as providing a more creative engagement between our lives and theology.

The apostles realized that they were sent into the world but were not of the world: the New Testament Church took that call seriously (John 17:16). Preparation for baptism in the early Church was an intensive process of formation in the Word of God. As the Presiding Bishop's Task Force on Christian Education, we call for the leaders of congregations to take seriously the commitment to call people into ministry shaped by the Baptismal Covenant. The baptism of infants, youth, and adults, and the renewal of baptismal vows must be seen as a major time of conversion and commitment in the life of the whole congregation. The liturgical church year provides a natural pattern of education that supports this endeavor. The emphasis is on Christian formation: the forming of Christian consciousness in a people called out of the world to be sent back into the world to image Christ in word and act. It is out of such a formation process that the Church and the individual Christian make a prophetic witness to society. For it is when Christians begin to perceive a relationship through Christ with the peoples of the world that they come to an involvement in the common struggle for justice. Thus, it is out of such a formation process that a Christian ethical stance begins to take shape in

both adults and children. A discipline of prayer, study, reflection, and spiritual direction lies at the heart of the formation process. Evangelism, renewal, Christian education, and prophetic witness are inextricably linked in congregations where conversion, formation, and Christian witness are the hallmarks of congregational life.

In the past three years we have attempted to listen to the Church and we hope that these proposals will strike a responsive chord in the experience of those who study them. Our recommendations come out of our experience of listening as well as out of our individual experiences of participating in congregational life and ministry.

The calling of the teaching ministry is to draw each person into the communion that is the Body of Christ: through sacrament, through the ministry and witness of the congregation, through the process of helping persons reflect and learn from the common experiences of life, and through engagement in the social issues of the day. The context of the educational endeavor is the congregation, the family, the community, and the wider community that comprises all the nations of the world. The standard for response is the biblical Word. The call to mission is the Baptismal Covenant. The ultimate goal of Christian education is to help us change those things in ourselves and in the world that are not part of God's plan, those things that are oppressive and that are not faithful to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Out of this conviction we submit our recommendations; we offer our vision for Christian education into the 21st century.

Finally, we the members of the task force wish to express our gratitude to the Presiding Bishop, to the Executive Council, and to the General Convention for the opportunity to become engaged with this lively and critical area of responsibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

1. *Mission: the foundation of educational ministry*

Resolution #A066

Whereas, Christians are formed and nurtured as followers of Jesus Christ through their participation in the total life and mission of the local congregation; and

Whereas, each congregation has the responsibility to discern what it is uniquely called to be and to do in order to fulfill its mission within the family of God; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Episcopal Church renew and strengthen its educational ministry by advocating a clear focus on mission at every level of its life; and be it further**

Resolved, **That the Executive Council provide the necessary structures and funding so that the Mission Operations Team can enable congregations, with diocesan support, to continue or initiate a process of mission discernment, challenge, leadership and resource development, and action.**

EXPLANATION: A vision of Christian education as integrally related to the total ministry and mission of the congregation was expressed by the majority of those consulted by the task force. Thus the task force recommends an ongoing process, first in self-selected dioceses and congregations within these dioceses and, later, throughout the Church as the necessary foundation for effective educational ministry. Within dioceses, mission consultants will be selected and equipped with biblical, theological, liturgical, and issue-oriented resources to assist and challenge congregations to discover new levels

of response to their calling and new ways of identifying opportunities and models for Christian formation within the congregation.

2. *Unified approaches to congregations*

Resolution #A067

Whereas, local congregations are supported and challenged in their mission by leadership and resources from diocesan, provincial, and national networks and structures; and

Whereas, all of these entities have expectations for and make demands on local congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the leadership of national, provincial, and diocesan structures and networks themselves model an inclusive and unified discernment, challenge, and response process that is clearly focused on the impact their planning, communications, and expectations have on the life of congregations.**

EXPLANATION: The task force heard many complaints regarding fragmentation, competing demands, and unrealistic expectations on the part of national and diocesan program networks and staff. Just as congregations need to plan holistically, the task force urges that all entities that relate in any way to congregations address similar questions. Groups such as the Executive Council, the Episcopal Church Center staff, the networks related to ongoing national programs, and similarly responsible leadership within dioceses would ask: What are we called to be and to do so that all congregations become learning, growing, communities of faith? What must be changed or added to our way of working with congregations or the resources we offer for their use?

3. *Leadership for Christian education*

Resolution #A068

Whereas, one of the most effective ways of implementing an inclusive and empowering model of Christian education is to invest in the current and future leadership of the Church; and

Whereas, every person, ordained and lay, within a congregation is potentially both a leader and a teacher; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Mission Operations Team, in collaboration with national, provincial and diocesan networks and structures, develop and implement a leadership training program based on common criteria in a form which allows for flexibility in meeting the needs of specific congregations; and be it further**

Resolved, **That funding and technical assistance be provided through the Executive Council budget to these networks for ongoing training and communication; and be it further**

Resolved, **That special attention be given to making the networks and their leadership truly representative in terms of race, gender, culture, language, and ethnicity.**

EXPLANATION: The task force urges the executive staff of the Episcopal Church Center to work through provincial and diocesan structures and through those networks closely linked to the national program of the Episcopal Church to formulate common criteria and coordinated plans and schedules for training. The task force further urges that the development of criteria and designs for training be undertaken

in collaboration with persons and groups knowledgeable about the special needs and resources of small congregations; the culture, language, and history of ethnic and racial groups in the Church; and the differing needs and resources of urban, suburban, and rural parishes.

4. *The influence of leadership styles and function on educational ministry*

Resolution #A069

Whereas, a major concern identified by the Task Force revolved around the ways in which those who minister in the Church, ordained and lay, understand themselves and their roles and how they function as educators; and

Whereas, bishops who perceive and exercise specific roles as educators affect educational ministry in local congregations; and

Whereas, every act of ministry in the congregation, whatever its primary intent, has an educational impact; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Executive Council provide the Mission Operations Team with funding to develop an action research project to study the identity, attitudes, and functions of ministers (lay and ordained) as educators; and be it further**

Resolved, **be the findings of this action research, through the Mission Operations Team, be disseminated, discussed, and evaluated in provincial, diocesan, and congregational settings to cultivate an awareness of leaders as educators.**

EXPLANATION: Awareness of the impact of ministry within the local congregation and in the community can contribute to better planning and evaluation of educational ministry. Reliable data in this area should be useful both to congregations and to leaders responsible for policy and planning in the Church.

5. *The role of seminaries in the preparation of leaders for educational ministry*

Resolution #A070

Whereas, seminaries have a particularly critical role in preparing ordained and lay leaders with necessary vision and skills for educational ministry; and

Whereas, the Task Force agrees with the 1987 Board for Theological Education Report which says that the primary task of seminaries is to provide theological expertise, biblical literacy, preaching and liturgical skills; and

Whereas, the Task Force further believes that how we teach and with whom we teach are as important as what we teach; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Education for Mission and Ministry Unit, the Board for Theological Education and each seminary collaborate with diocesan, congregational, and other educators in a process of exploring new ways to deepen the vision of the educational context of all congregational life; and be it further**

Resolved, **That the Education for Mission and Ministry Unit identify and share in the support of at least three creative seminary-based projects that empower seminary graduates to be effective educational leaders and that information regarding these projects be widely disseminated and evaluated.**

EXPLANATION: Both explicitly and implicitly, all courses, internships, and disciplines of theological education provide models of teaching ministry. All faculty, administrators, and students are potential enablers of effective educational ministries. The total impact of seminary life and teaching methods create images of the teaching

ministry that remain with seminary students long after graduation. The task force applauds the courses now offered in seminaries in the area traditionally identified as religious education. In addition, the task force urges that fresh attention be directed by seminaries toward the educational potential of those aspects of ministry that are not generally understood nor undertaken for the express purpose of teaching, namely, the celebration of the sacraments, especially baptism; the pastoral and counseling ministry; special events in the life of the religious community; and the service and witness of the congregation in the world. These are at the heart of parish life and each has powerful potential as an occasion for interpreting the faith. Through dialogue and consultation involving seminary faculty, Education for Mission and Ministry staff, and diocesan and parish educators, each seminary is encouraged to determine how it can best offer both models and experience that support a holistic vision of educational ministry in congregations and encourage the acquisition of a range of teaching and interpretation skills.

6. *Resources for educational ministry*

Resolution #A071

Whereas, an urgent need has been expressed by educators for a clearer sense of direction based on common principles and guidelines for educational ministry in the Episcopal Church; and

Whereas, an equally urgent plea was made that recognition be given to local congregations to express and build on their diversity in size, needs, culture, language, liturgical practice, resources, and ethnic and racial heritage; and

Whereas, clergy and laity engaged in educational ministry require resources that will assist them in meeting the specific educational needs of Episcopal communicants of all ages; and

Whereas, a wide variety of curricula and other resources have been produced by other churches, by Episcopal dioceses, congregations, seminaries, ethnic communities, and private groups and individuals; and

Whereas, this diversity of available resources reflects and, in a sense, responds to the diversity among Episcopal congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring. **That the Education for Mission and Ministry Unit assume responsibility for overseeing the preparation of a manual (possibly entitled *Called to Teach and Learn in the Episcopal Church*) that will have the purpose of lifting up a vision of Christian education in Episcopal congregations consonant with the vision and goals statement of the Task Force and, also, provide clear, practical guidelines for planning and implementing Christian education in different contexts; set forth norms for the selection and production of curriculum and other resources; describe specific teaching and learning needs and characteristics for all age groups; identify specifically Anglican theological, liturgical, and historical content for study; and outline alternative models for teacher training; and be it further**

Resolved, **That the Education for Mission and Ministry Unit develop guidelines and norms as well as the other planning necessary to produce the manual in collaboration with the appropriate inter-unit working groups at the Episcopal Church Center, in order to draw on the insights and experience of both leaders and local practitioners from all racial, ethnic, and cultural communities, and from the widest possible range of program concerns of the people of the Church; and be it further**

Resolved, **That the Education for Mission and Ministry Unit develop and implement a plan to familiarize the leaders of congregations throughout the Church with**

the manual and to assist them in using it as a foundation for the renewal of their educational ministries; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church, through its educational leaders, recognize and affirm the production of curriculum materials and supplementary resources by dioceses, congregations, seminaries, ethnic communities, and private groups and individuals; and that the Education for Mission and Ministry Unit disseminate among these groups the norms for Episcopal curriculum, offer individual consultation or workshops to provide technical assistance and training for curriculum writers affiliated with the groups listed above or at the grassroots level; and be it further

Resolved, That the Education for Mission and Ministry and Communication units oversee the development of a continuing program for the production of videotaped material and for its distribution to congregations in both English and Spanish versions, such material to include a training series for volunteer teachers; a "video resource" to share current news and information regarding programs and resources used in Episcopal congregations; a series on how to assess program needs, and to design, implement, and evaluate programs; and such other units and series as may be required in the future.

EXPLANATION: After careful study and reflection on the experience of the Episcopal Church and other churches in mounting major Christian education programs, including the production of a national Episcopal curriculum in the 1950s and 60s, and after listening carefully to a wide range of clergy and lay educators and other leaders, the task force has resolved to recommend that the Church begin the process of educational renewal by focusing on congregations in mission. Curriculum and other materials are tools that must serve the specific needs of each congregation as it seeks to nurture, form, and empower its members as followers of Jesus Christ. Tools must be carefully chosen to serve particular purposes appropriate to those who will use them. The manual we propose is a first step in providing unified guidelines and norms that will enable congregations to choose or develop tools appropriate to their situation. The diversity that the task force encountered among Episcopal congregations requires a wide range of resources. The proposal for mission consultants within dioceses, the comprehensive leadership training networks, and the proposals for the establishment of more effective systems for the dissemination and exchange of information among educators are intended to provide a structure that will, on the one hand, unify Episcopal educational ministry and, on the other, encourage local creativity appropriate to the rich diversity characteristic of this Church.

7. Communication and mutual assistance among Episcopal educators

Resolution #A072

Whereas, congregational leaders urgently need up-to-date information regarding available curriculum and other resources together with evaluations of their usefulness in different contexts; and

Whereas, very few congregations have access to well-equipped resource centers and to consultants familiar with all available biblical, theological, historical, or issue-oriented resources; and

Whereas, modern technology now offers the Church unprecedented opportunities for better communication and educational planning that will soon become available to most congregations; therefore be it

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the staff of the Episcopal Church Center oversee the development of a plan for encouraging the use

of computers in educational ministry by fostering the development of software that would enable congregations and dioceses to call up needed information and resources, and that would offer administrators and teachers a variety of options by printing out feasible and individualized plans for teaching and learning; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church Center staff also provide information and encouragement for setting up systems of inter-computer communication among the Episcopal Church Center, diocesan offices, and local congregations for the sharing of information and the development of educational strategies; and be it further

Resolved, That in the interim period before such a system can become operational, efforts be made to utilize the columns of newspapers and magazines that have regular and frequent publication schedules, including, but not limited to, those publications especially directed to educators.

EXPLANATION: While this proposal may not be able to be realized immediately, the technology is sufficiently advanced so that it is more than a futuristic dream. Some local churches are already utilizing computers for planning and individualized resource selection. The task force believes that it is important that Episcopal dioceses and congregations become familiar with the potential that exists in order to take advantage of it in the near future. Meanwhile, we encourage exploration with editors of papers and magazines, especially those that enjoy a broad, general readership in the Church, so that they might include information about resources as a regular feature in their publications.