

Committee on the State of the Church

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MEMBERSHIP

The Rev. Thomas F. Pike, *Chair*, New York, New York
Mrs. Kit T. Caffey, *Vice Chair*, Daphne, Alabama
Dr. Warren C. Ramshaw, *Secretary-Treasurer*, Hamilton, New York
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The Rev. Robert Johnson, Atlanta, Georgia
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The Rev. Canon Roswell O. Moore, Menlo Park, California
Mrs. Catherine Saucedo, Jalisco, Mexico
The Ven. Orris G. Walker, Jr., Detroit, Michigan
The Rev. Canon Ronald L. Wiley, Fremont, Nebraska
The Very Rev. David B. Collins, Townsend, Georgia, *ex officio*
Ms. Pamela P. Chinnis, Washington, D.C., *ex officio*
Authorized by the committee to accept non-substantive changes:
the Rev. Thomas F. Pike

SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

Title I, Canon 6, Section 1 charges this committee with responsibility to approve the Parochial Report form, and Canon I.6.3b charges it to prepare and present to the House of Deputies a "report on the State of the Church." Since 1970 the committee has moved from presenting its report in largely statistical form to making substantive comments on developments and trends which reflect the Church's condition more comprehensively.

The committee met four times during the triennium, and in its first meeting dealt with these matters referred to it by the 1985 General Convention as indicated:

- A140—To receive reports from dioceses concerning compliance with Affirmative Action procedures: Stood ready to receive.
- A141—To continue to study the needs and desires of minority groups within the Church: Referred to National Mission.
- A145—To receive programmatic information from Province IX: Determined to hold a committee meeting in the Diocese of Western Mexico and meet with those involved in ministry there.
- C056—To study the potential for leadership and ministry of working class people within the structures of the Church: Determined to study and learn from the conference of the Appalachian Peoples Service Organization and their subsequent Study of Working Class Ministry. See report of Structure Subcommittee, below.
- D138—To seek information from the dioceses on efforts toward evangelism: Received the following information from the Department of Evangelism at the Episcopal Church Center.

Diocesan Efforts Toward Evangelism

As of November 1987 there were 88 of 100 dioceses that had working units in evangelism ministries. There were other dioceses that were developing plans for departments of evangelism, and they may be operative at this time.

In May 1987 the Department of Evangelism Ministries surveyed all the dioceses and by July 1987 had responses from 49. The survey inquired about which activities were most fruitful, what major difficulties they encountered, what were their objectives for 1987—1988, what needs they had, and what resources they used which they would commend to others.

The most fruitful activities proved to be referrals and workshops on evangelism and renewal, Evangelism Consultant Training (ECT), LEAD workshops, and use of the program "Proclamation, Story and Choice." The major difficulties reported were apathy and low priority by clergy, and ignorance about evangelism among clergy and laity. The most often stated objectives for the future were training sessions for clergy and laity using programs or modifications of those developed by the national Church. The greatest needs expressed included money, new ideas and methods to overcome apathy among clergy, and better information on the basics of evangelism. The programs most often recommended as useful were ECT, LEAD, and "Proclamation, Story and Choice." In conclusion, it appears that a small number of enthusiastic people are having a difficult time stirring up interest in evangelism and renewal in this great Church. Some are hopeful, others are not.

Following these early efforts, the committee subsequently organized its work around the four themes of: 1. Mission, a view of what the Church is sent to do; 2. Vitality, the life which is needed to carry out mission; 3. Analysis, a measure of the Church's condition; and 4. Structures, looking to see whether they enable or impede mission. The following four sections reflect a combination of quantitative and qualitative observations which summarize the committee's findings.

1. Mission

Q. What is the mission of the Church?

A. The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other.

Q. How does the Church pursue its mission?

A. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love.

Q. Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?

A. The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members.

An Outline of the Faith

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 855.

Mindful of the Church's concern for Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence, the Committee on the State of the Church centered on the following areas of focus for the consideration of the General Convention in Detroit 1988. At the same time, the Presiding Bishop was in the process of developing eight Mission Imperatives that touched on many of the same concerns. This committee's areas of focus and the imperatives of the Presiding Bishop, developed independently, will be seen to be remarkably similar. These two routes to the goals and imperatives of the Church point to a congruence of thought about and hopes for the Church's future activity.

A New Look at the Church's Mission

1. The Great Commission of Jesus Christ to his Church states, “. . . Go and make disciples of all peoples . . .” In obedience to the Great Commission, the Church needs to develop additional creative ways and means to enable it to obey this commission in each congregation and neighborhood, across town, in the diocese, the nations, and the world.

The Church and the World

The proclamation of the Gospel regarding human dignity is confronted by changing economic, political, and social patterns which often bring disastrous consequences. Therefore:

2. We must better understand the relationships of American social, economic, and political structures to the emerging social, economic, and political structures of other nations.

3. Anticipating the approach of the Lambeth Conference 1988, and its agenda of Mission and Ministry, Dogmatic and Pastoral Concerns, Ecumenical Relations, and Christianity and the Social Order, we must draw on the structures and facilities available in the world-wide Anglican Communion, including our commitment to the Anglican Consultative Council's program of Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence, with a view toward achieving peace and justice on a global scale.

The Church at Home

Recognizing the brokenness of our own condition, we must disseminate:

4. Our ministry of hope and reconciliation with those who in despair and defeat turn toward suicide;

5. Our ministry of peace among all people, especially in home and families, and address the problem of violence in our society;

6. Our ministry of healing and compassion with those whose quality of life is affected by homelessness, hunger, substance abuse, or disease.

The Church and Its Members

Further, we must:

7. Invigorate our ministry to young adults outside the Church and find ways of attracting them to the life of the Church;

8. Explore ways and means by which our congregations may respond to and on behalf of those whose needs are not met by existing institutions;

9. Strengthen the role of the Church in helping formulate public policy by equipping its individual members to speak out on vital ethical and moral issues and to serve in decision-making situations;

10. Seek ways in which the Church may bring the integrity of our Anglican tradition to contending forces and perceptions within the Church without losing either our sense of unity in diversity or our vocation to promote justice, peace and love.

2. Vitality

“Vitality describes that characteristic by which we recognize that life is present, and the source of all life in the Church, as in the world, is God. As church people we experience vitality sacramentally both as an inward awareness of and as an outward manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

“Vitality is encountered in many areas of the Church where we recognize intellectually and intuitively signs of God’s presence. Individually we are able to grow, to be accepting, forgiving, vulnerable, and to risk. Corporately we are intentional both about our spirituality and about our commitment to making a real difference in the world. God strengthens us as ‘new partnerships evolve, founded upon the Gospel perception that we are called with our brothers and sisters everywhere to ministry.

“Where vitality exists the Church is a vigorous agent for God. Vitality enables us to promote the spiritual and physical well-being of all of God’s children and brings our life in Christ to fulfillment. Our commitment to reach out in evangelism and social action is the sacramental sign of our commitment to the deep inward journey with God.”

The Committee on the State of the Church developed this statement in response to a shared sense that fresh energy and growing enthusiasm among groups around the Church pointed to a renewal of vitality in our common life. Knowing that such a sense could not be tested objectively but only supported subjectively, the committee determined to ask for opinions from around the Church. If indeed renewed vitality were present, and sources for it could be identified, strategies for encouraging more of it might be developed to strengthen the Church for mission in future years.

The committee conducted two inquiries in 1987. The first involved chairpersons and staff persons of interim bodies of the General Convention, and the provincial presidents; the second, parishes and individuals in Provinces I through IX.

In both cases the committee asked:

“Where do you experience vitality (in your area of responsibility?) (in your parish?)”

“Can you describe examples?”

“Can you identify factors which contribute to this vitality?”

“Can you draw conclusions which suggest courses of action for the Church in the future?”

Responses from provincial presidents and those involved with interim bodies reported a rich and profound awareness of vitality in their ministries, reflecting the variety of ways in which they serve. They reflected vitality in personal development, as well as seeing parish growth in worship, music, stewardship, outreach, spirituality, Bible study, Christian education, and evangelism. They described collaboration among larger church groups and institutions in the fields of planning, ecumenism, education, and world issues.

They identified two chief contributing factors:

Leadership, particularly that of the Presiding Bishop, and

Liturgical renewal, which they identified with the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* and the 1982 *Hymnal*.

Direction for the future was summarized by one respondent: “Keep on keeping on!”

Representatives from the Ninth Province, as well as 30 congregations in the dioceses of Atlanta, California, Central Gulf Coast, Central New York, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, West Missouri, West Texas, and Wyoming responded from communities which were urban, suburban, rural, and inner city, and which reflected profound differences in affluence, age, and life style.

Their statements mirrored the richness of vitality reported by national leaders.

Q. "Where do you experience vitality in the congregation?"

A. *In worship*, in particular in the Eucharist, and in church music. Other areas mentioned most often were:

Christian Education, with a strong emphasis on adult education which relates Bible study to current concerns;

Outreach, ministry to those in need beyond the parish borders;

Leadership, lay and ordained; and

Development of the parish as a community which is inclusive, caring and involved.

Q. Can you identify factors which have contributed to this vitality?

A. *Leadership*, particularly that of articulate and committed lay people who claim their own authority as ministers;

Stating the vision, done by ordained ministers who set before the people the call to serve, and opportunities for service;

Strong Christian Education programs, providing the environment from which growth and energy could occur; and

Diversity, which was seen as an asset.

Q. Can you draw conclusions for the future?

A. *Continue to focus on liturgy*, following the direction set by the *Book of Common Prayer*, *The Hymnal*, and other musical resources.

Provide effective Christian Education, especially for adults. Lay leaders who are grounded in the faith are the key to the vitality of mission in the congregation.

Articulate the Gospel vision clearly, for from that Good News comes renewal, stewardship, outreach, healing, and reconciliation.

Implications for the Future

There is much to celebrate in what was said about vitality in the Church. The Committee on the State of the Church believes that such news should be brought to the attention of those who have planning and program responsibilities which could be influenced by these findings. We ask that the General Convention determine to highlight these findings by passage of Resolution #A156, *On Vitality in the Church*, in the Resolutions Section of this report.

3. Analysis

The 1985 Parochial Reports provide the most recent information available for study in preparation for the 1988 General Convention. The clearest impression from study of this data, which lists the 1985 baptized membership at 2,739,422, as compared with data from 1970 and 1980, is one of increasing commitment from diminishing membership in the Episcopal Church.

The evidence of increasing commitment is seen:

In attendance at worship, with a 1985 average of 41.7% of baptized members present on four key Sundays. The 1980 figure was 40.9%; 1974 was 30.4%.

In per household giving. The average for 1985 was \$8.58 per week; up from \$5.69 in 1980.

In the number of adults confirmed and received from other churches, up 15% between 1980 and 1985.

The diminishing membership base is apparent:

In baptized membership, which declined 1.6% between 1980 and 1985.

Only Provinces IV, VII, and VIII showed slight growth during that period, reflecting "sun belt migration." In addition, the Church's percentage share of total population went down from 1.37% in 1980 to 1.15% in 1985.

In pledging units per 100 members. The decrease from 25.14 pledgers per hundred members in 1980 to 24.7 pledgers per hundred members in 1985 may be the other side of the coin of the increase in per household giving.

In adult baptisms. The overall increase between the 1970 figure of 2.1 per thousand members and the 1980 level of 2.7 per thousand members reversed by 1985 to 2.4 per thousand members. Only Province IV continues to show increase, while Province VII is holding steady.

The only area of the Church's life which showed significantly increased numbers of people across the board during this period was the enrollment in Parish Day Schools. The 15% rise between 1980 and 1985 calls, the committee believes, for the kind of further study recommended in Resolution #A157, *On Episcopal Day Schools*, included in the Resolutions Section of this report.

In the quest for signs of authentic growth in the Church, the committee first identified 35 dioceses in which the reported baptized membership in 1985 was greater than in 1980. These 35 represented all the domestic provinces except Province I. In most cases, however, the "growth" still lagged behind the growth in population in the state in which it was located. Accordingly, the committee proceeded to identify 12 dioceses in which membership increase was greater than that of the state of jurisdiction. These were the dioceses of Western New York, Easton, Virginia, Washington, Alabama, Atlanta, Central Gulf Coast, Western North Carolina, Western Kansas, Hawaii, Oregon, and San Joaquin.

In response to a request that these dioceses identify factors which had contributed to such a level of growth, ten suggested these five interrelated areas:

Leadership, specifically the active, vigorous, faithful leadership of the bishop, and the formation of a coherent diocesan strategy. Such strategy evidenced cooperative work with diocesan councils, staff, and clerical and lay leaders;

Congregational development, with emphasis on stewardship, evangelism, the ministry of the laity, development of new sites, and revitalization of urban parishes, all reflecting strong diocesan commitment to congregational support;

Clergy development, with strong diocesan policies in the areas of screening, training, placement, vacancy consultation, and recruitment;

Lay development, particularly in stewardship, evangelism, renewal, and education for ministry. Adult candidates for confirmation or reception were mentioned by three dioceses;

Financial resources, with a direct association made between Venture in Mission and the increasing level of stewardship in the dioceses.

These responses from dioceses showing numerical growth, centering as they do on the role of the bishop in strategic planning and development, have led the committee to suggest Resolution #A158, *On Bishops as Leaders in Growth* in the Resolutions Section of this report. The concern for the office and ministry of bishops is not the responsibility only of the bishops themselves, but of the whole Church.

4. Structure

The committee planned at its early meetings to follow up its work on Mission, Vitality and Analysis with a survey to determine whether or not the structures that are in place in congregations, dioceses, provinces and the national Church were seen to enhance or inhibit growth and vitality as it had been identified. That work remains for the next triennium.

In the meantime, in response to the direction of the last General Convention, which instructed the committee to study the potential for leadership of working class people within the Church, the committee recognized the substantial work already being done on this topic by the Appalachian Peoples' Service Organization (APSO). This group has since co-sponsored with the Working Class Ministry Steering Committee a conference entitled *Hourly Wage Earner Congregations in the Episcopal Church*. The committee subsequently received and examined the report on the conference and its conclusions, which was prepared by the Rev. Robert W. Carlson, now Deployment Officer in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. We commend this study to the Convention, and have prepared Resolution #A159, *On Working Class Ministry*, included in the Resolutions Section of this report, to support its findings.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Appropriations from the General Convention	Expenses
1986 \$14,140	\$ 7,880
1987 24,690	11,788
1988 14,660	

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #A156

On Vitality in the Church

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Committee on the State of the Church send copies of its report to all bishops and parish clergy, and to the Board for Theological Education, commending in particular the section highlighting adult education as a key to developing vitality in mission in the congregations.**

EXPLANATION: The report of the Committee on the State of the Church contains information which will be valuable to the whole Church, in particular that which suggests direction for the future for those who have planning and program responsibilities. We believe that parish clergy, in particular, need to hear what people from congregations around the country have said about those elements of parish life which promote and support vitality in mission.

Resolution #A157

On Episcopal Day Schools

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 69th General Convention request the Executive Council, through the Office of Education for Mission and Ministry and in cooperation with the National Association of Episcopal Schools, to study, within the limits of available funding:

- (1). the demographic characteristics of students and staff of Episcopal Day Schools;
- (2). the evangelistic and educational opportunities in the mission of the Church, while, at the same time, respecting the religious and cultural traditions of others; and
- (3). the structural and canonical relationships with the congregations and dioceses with which they are associated; and be it further

Resolved, That the results of this study, with recommendations, be reported to the 70th General Convention in 1991.

EXPLANATION: In pursuing the provisions of this resolution, the committee, prompted in its action by the 15% growth of Episcopal Day School enrollment, from 1980 to 1985, will make itself available to work in cooperation with the Office of Education for Mission and Ministry and the National Association of Episcopal Schools.

Resolution #A158

On Bishops as Leaders in Growth

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 69th General Convention request the Council for the Development of Ministry, with the cooperation of the House of Bishops Committee on Pastoral Development, to carry out a study of the entire process for the selection, orientation, evaluation, continuing education, and transition of bishops as leaders in growth in the Episcopal Church, and report its findings to the 70th General Convention in 1991.

EXPLANATION: The central role of the bishop in diocesan leadership emerges as an absolutely crucial factor in growth in the dioceses. Study of existing policies and practices is a practical first step toward developing strategies which will support the crucial role of bishops in developing growth.

Resolution #A159

On Working Class Ministry

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the Executive Council provide resources to work with the Working Class Ministry Conference Steering Committee to:

1. Gather and study church demographics for a more accurate picture of the Church's makeup;
2. Inform the Church about the findings of these demographics through seminars, conferences, Christian education programs, printed materials, and existing channels of communications;
3. Work with the dioceses and seminaries on issues of clergy training and deployment for the special needs of working class congregations;

4. **Develop a communications network for the sharing and dissemination of ideas and information on working class ministry;**
5. **Report to the 70th General Convention with recommendations for strategies for the future so that the gifts of working class Episcopalians may be effectively integrated into the leadership of this Church.**

EXPLANATION: The State of the Church Committee submits this resolution in conjunction with the Working Class Ministry Steering Committee of APSO. We believe that this resolution addresses the concern for the inclusion of those people who receive an hourly wage and do not have discretionary use of their work time. This resolution sets in motion a process which will lead to fuller participation of working class Episcopalians in the planning and decision-making councils of this Church.

Resolution #A160

On the Preparation of the Parochial Report

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Committee on the State of the Church support the Church Center staff in its efforts to provide educational workshops to diocesan representatives on the topic of the Parochial Report so that the dioceses may assist congregations in the current and timely completion of the reports, and in the effective use of the data in their own educational and development programs.**

Resolution #A161

On Continuing Demographic Information

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Mission Planning Unit of the Church Center staff be urged to produce an age and sex profile, together with other pertinent demographic information on the Church's membership, and to do so on a regular basis to learn who we are, and to make this information available for the use of dioceses, provinces, and the national Church.**

GOALS FOR THE COMING TRIENNIUM

The Committee on the State of the Church establishes these general areas of work for the coming triennium.

1. To continue working around the four areas of concern identified in this triennium—Mission, Vitality, Analysis and Structure.
2. To watch with interest the areas where exploration has begun, i.e., Episcopal Day Schools, Working Class Ministry and the Office of Bishop, and to be open to other areas.
3. To continue consultation with the Executive Council and the Church Center staff on the preparation, administration and interpretation of parochial and diocesan reports.
4. In the light of the committee's history, to prepare a new statement of purpose, function and responsibilities of the committee in order to serve the purpose of the Church more effectively.
5. To continue to express our availability as part of the Council of Advice to the President of the House of Deputies.

RESOLUTION ON BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS

Resolution #A162

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, **That there be appropriated from the Assessment Budget of General Convention the sum of \$91,680 for the triennium for the expenses of the Committee on the State of the Church.**

APPENDIX

A HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH

The Committee on the State of the Church is the oldest committee of General Convention. It was the first committee established by General Convention and it has through the years played a major role in the work of the Convention.

Initially, the committee was made up of all members of the House of Deputies. The earliest mention of a Committee on the State of the Church is to be found in the General Convention Journal of 1792, which recorded that the House of Deputies went into a "Committee of the Whole on the State of the Church" to reflect on the Church's constitution which had just been completed by the previous General Convention. Of particular concern for the deputies was the veto power given the House of Bishops over legislative acts of the House of Deputies. The Committee of the Whole on the State of the Church was mentioned in journals of subsequent General Conventions. In 1795, for example, when a proposed canon "to prevent a congregation in any Diocese or State, from uniting with a Church in any other Diocese or State" was received from the House of Bishops, the matter was referred to the "Committee of the Whole on the State of the Church."

In 1804 a canon was enacted that called for the House of Deputies to draw up a triennial report on the "State of the Church." The report would be based on diocesan reports as well as "such other papers, viz., Episcopal charges, addresses, and pastoral letters as may tend to throw light on the State of the Church in each diocese." The process called for parochial reports to be submitted to the dioceses and printed in diocesan journals. The journal entries along with accompanying papers would be read to the House of Deputies before being sent to the House of Bishops for their examination. The process would be completed when the bishops drew up a pastoral letter based on these documents and the pastoral read to the House of Deputies before the end of the Convention.

The Committee on the State of the Church was established by Convention in 1808 to assist in the drawing up of the report. Its task was to put together a composite report after the diocesan reports had been read to the deputies, incorporating into the report comments and insights elicited in the deputies' discussion. The report drawn up by committee would then be submitted to the full House for approval before being sent to the bishops. The process was modified in 1814 to expedite the task. The reading of the diocesan journals before the full House of Deputies was discontinued. The journals were sent directly to the Committee on the State of the Church, which was given sole responsibility for drawing up the report. Since the committee was made up of clerical deputies from every diocese of the Church, every diocese would be represented in the process. (At one point in the early years the membership of the committee was doubled to include lay as well as clerical representation, perhaps to make the committee more fully representative, but the growing number of dioceses represented in General Convention soon made the committee too large to be efficient.) The diocesan reports were read in committee, a report drawn up and submitted to the House for approval before being sent to the House of Bishops. The task of drawing up the report seems to have been quite simple at the outset. The committee was content to paste together the diocesan reports as received with little or no comment. The unevenness of the diocesan reports, primarily due to the fact that no guidelines were provided for those drawing up the report, soon drove the committee to develop guidelines and a format. Initially, the guidelines specified that information on the numbers of baptisms, marriages, and funerals, and of communicants in the parish, and "all other matters that may throw light on the state of the same" be included in the reports. In the course of years

many more items were added to the list in areas such as finance, church schools, candidates for the ministry, and missions. The committee eventually developed standardized forms on which to submit parochial and diocesan reports. A statistical tabular form was also developed by the committee so that its report on church statistics would be more readily intelligible.

Gathering information, collating the data, reflecting on their significance, and drawing up a report developed into an increasingly complex and time-consuming task for a committee whose term was limited to the duration of Convention. The committee was the largest body in General Convention and many members were available to assist in the task, but even with a large committee lack of adequate time to reflect on the diocesan reports proved to be a growing concern for the committee. The task of reflecting on church statistics and commenting on salient developments reflected in the data took on growing importance for the committee.

In early years the committee must have assumed that the bishops would comment on the diocesan reports in their pastoral letters. Yet the committee could not avoid drawing conclusions once it began to tabulate, collate and condense the information it received. The report of 1847, for example, felt obliged to point out the shortage of clergy in the growing Church. In 1859 the committee commented on the lack of stewardship in the Church as it examined the financial statistics. In 1862 the committee pointed out the inadequacy of the Church's education program. Raw data presented without comment would scarcely qualify as a report on the state of the Church. The fact that the Bishops' Pastoral Letters were not specifically concerned with the "state of the Church" must have encouraged the committee to assume responsibility by providing the Church with a triennial report on its health.

The committee was also involved in other activities besides reporting on the state of the Church. It served as a clearing house for resolutions and legislative proposals that did not come under the jurisdiction of any existing committee or commission. An 1847 resolution from the Committee of Canons to change the date for General Convention to meet was referred to the Committee on the State of the Church. In 1871 a memorial on sisterhood (or religious order) was referred to the committee, which responded with a thoughtful appreciation of the role played by women in the Church and submitted a recommendation in support of promoting sisterhoods. A resolution of 1883 calling for instruction in apologetics in the Church's educational programs in an age in which secularism was posing a growing threat was also referred to the same committee. In 1883 a memorial from the Diocese of Indiana calling for reviving the office of "evangelist," resolutions on church schools, on "unauthorized worship," on use of arbitration to settle international disputes, on church unity, on preservation "of the rights of the Laity to take their part in the public praise of the sanctuary," and several other matters were referred to the Committee on the State of the Church. Whether the committee dealt with the issues themselves or whether it proposed that an existing committee or a new committee deal with them, it was made aware of issues and opportunities in a wide range of spheres in church life. It was inevitable that the committee reports include observations growing out of these activities. In 1907 the committee recommended that the House of Bishops take note of the reports of all the church commissions as well as the acts of previous General Conventions in the preparation of the Pastoral Letter. Yet the committee could not have been very sanguine about the prospect of the Bishops' Pastoral serving as an assessment of the life of the Church. The Pastorals singled out aspects of church life for examination and comment. They were not intended as reports on the full life of the Church.

The committee was in a far better position to reflect on the gathered information

and to present a report on all facets of church life than the Pastoral Letter Committee of the House of Bishops. By 1922 the committee decided that its report should carry a full survey of church life. In the 1922 report the committee examined the state of missions, social services, religious education, the "nation-wide campaign," the Faith and Order Movement, as well as the familiar reports on parishes, dioceses, clergy and finance.

Discontinuance in the twentieth century of the traditional practice of seeking approval of the committee's report from the House of Deputies, as well as discontinuance of the practice of sending the reports to the House of Bishops, were implicit acknowledgements that the committee had sole responsibility for assessing the state of the Church. In 1921 the committee was made into an *ad interim* committee of General Convention so that it would have more time to carry out its task. In 1949 a modest budget was allotted to the committee to meet expenses (\$500.00 for the whole triennium!). In 1961 the committee succeeded in establishing a statistics and research office with professional staffing to help in the collecting, tabulating and appraising of data from the Church. The committee appointed sub-committees to examine various spheres of church life. With an expanded budget in the 1970s the committee was able to hold meetings during the interim between Conventions to carry on its work. In 1979 it funded a study by a professional agency to develop a profile of Episcopalians which would reveal demographic trends in the Church. Since 1970 the Presidents of the House of Deputies have used the committee as a council of advice.

The publication of the committee's report in the 1985 General Convention Blue Book reflected the growing legislative activities of the committee. Using professional consultants, the committee studied (1) the implementation of General Convention action in the dioceses, (2) minority needs, (3) attitude of young adults toward the Christian faith, (4) the needs of the elderly in American society and the Church's ministry to them, (5) the annual parochial report forms, and (6) the "profile of Episcopalians."

While the reports of the past 50 years have examined a broad spectrum of the Church's life, no discussion of the nature and the mission of the Church has accompanied the assessments. An ecclesiology has informed the committee's reports, but no discussion of the nature and purpose of the Church has been contained in the reports. It will be interesting to see whether the committee's expanding activities will result in an examination of its ecclesiological assumptions.

Prepared for the committee by
the Rev. Frank E. Sugeno, Professor of Church History,
The Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest,
in consultation with Dr. Warren C. Ramshaw