

The Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church

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INTRODUCTION

The Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") is charged by the Canons (Title I, Canon 1, Section 2(n)(8) to "...study and make recommendations concerning the structure of the General Convention and of the Church..." and to "...review the operation of the several Committees and Commissions to determine the necessity for their continuance and the effectiveness of their functions and to bring about a coordination of their efforts."

The agenda of the Commission originates from (1) specific referrals by resolutions of the preceding General Convention; (2) the commission's review of "...the operation of the several Committees and Commissions..."; (3) resolutions introduced at preceding General Conventions but not adopted (at times because of lack of time for full consideration); (4) matters requested for consideration by other committees, commissions, organizations or individuals; and (5) matters identified by members of the Commission.

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

The composition of the Commission, with date of expiration of term and diocese of each member, is as follows:

The Rt. Rev. David S. Ball	1994	Albany
The Rt. Rev. William A. Beckham	1994	Upper South Carolina
The Rt. Rev. David E. Johnson	1994	Massachusetts
The Rev. Gayle Harris	1994	Rochester
The Rev. William Malotke, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	1994	Springfield
The Very Rev. Durstan R. McDonald	1997	Texas
Mrs. Margaret (Peg) Anderson, <i>Executive Council Liaison</i>	1994	Arizona
Mr. Charles M. Crump, <i>Chair</i>	1994	West Tennessee
Mrs. Carmine Goodhouse	1997	North Dakota
Mrs. Betty Gilmore, <i>Secretary</i>	1997	Northwest Texas
Mrs. Audrey M. King	1994	Newark
Mr. Jorge Lee	1997	Northern Mexico
Mr. George McGonigle, <i>Consultant</i>	1994	Texas

The Commission voted to authorize Bishops Ball, Beckham and Johnson with respect to the House of Bishops, and the Chairman, Mr. Crump, and Mrs. Gilmore, the Secretary, as to the House of Deputies, to accept or reject, on behalf of the Commission, any non-substantive amendments proposed in the respective Houses.

MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION

The full Commission met three times during the triennium; at Toddhall Retreat and Conference Center, Columbia, Illinois, on April 26-28, 1992, and November 15-17, 1992, and

at the St. Columba Episcopal Conference Center, Memphis, Tennessee, on November 7-9, 1993.

I. General Convention

A. Resolutions

1. Volume of Resolutions

The number of resolutions introduced at General has increased from 368 in 1982 to 582 in 1991. In 1991 "A" resolutions introduced by interim bodies accounted for 41% and "D" resolutions introduced by deputies accounted for 36% of all resolutions introduced. The number of legislative days remained the same at ten for the 1982 and 1991 Conventions. The Commission believes this volume of resolutions is the principal cause of the frustration of many bishops and deputies with resulting call for change in procedure.

As a result of this frustration the Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies held two meetings during the triennium of representatives of seven different groups who were concerned with the structure of the Church, although the Canon specifically authorizes this Commission to study and make recommendations concerning the structure of the General Convention and of the Church.

The Commission recommends restraint by all parties in the introduction of resolutions and the elimination of resolutions which simply restate positions already expressed in prior resolutions unless there has been a major change of circumstances.

In an effort to reduce the volume of resolutions the Commission recommends the following resolutions for adoption by the House of Deputies and House of Bishops respectively:

Resolution #A123

1 *Resolved*, That Rule VI.21 of the Rules of Order of the House of Deputies be amended by
2 inserting a new paragraph (c) as follows and by renumbering the subsequent paragraph:

3 (c). All resolutions of Deputies shall be proposed by one Deputy and be
4 endorsed by not less than two additional Deputies, all three being from
5 different dioceses. Individual Deputies shall be limited to proposing not
6 more than three resolutions.

Resolution #A124

1 *Resolved*, That Rule IV of the Rules of Order of the House of Bishops be amended by
2 adding at the end of said rule the following:

3 All resolutions of Bishops shall be proposed by one
4 Bishop and be endorsed by not less than two additional
5 Bishops, all three being from different dioceses.
6 Individual Bishops shall be limited to proposing not
7 more than three resolutions.

2. Amendment to Joint Rule III - Resolutions not Concurred

It has been the practice at past General Conventions for resolutions not concurred to be referred to interim bodies. The Commission believes this results in a proliferation of resolutions for the ensuing triennial. Any proponent of a resolution is free to submit the idea to an interim body, to the Executive Council or have the resolution reintroduced at the succeeding General Convention. Consequently, the commission recommends the following resolution:

Resolution #A125

1 *Resolved*, the House of ____ concurring, **That Joint Rule III.14 be amended by designating**
 2 **the same as 14(a) and by adding the following as 14(b):**

3 **Resolutions not reported by a legislative committee or**
 4 **not acted upon by both Houses shall have no further**
 5 **force or effect following the adjournment of the**
 6 **General Convention at which they are introduced.**

3. Consent Calendar

Rule III.6 of the House of Deputies provides for a Consent Calendar on which a resolution reported out of a legislative committee is placed on the Calendar if the report is by unanimous action and the committee recommends placement of the matter on the Consent Calendar. There is further provision that such a resolution may be removed if any lay or clerical deputation requests removal.

The Commission recommends that Rule III.6 be amended to change the requirement of a unanimous to a two-thirds vote and to require three rather than one lay or clerical deputations for removal from the Consent Calendar.

The Commission recommends the adoption of the following resolution by the House of Deputies:

Resolution #A126

1 *Resolved*, **That the ninth sentence of the second paragraph of Rule III.6 of the Rules of**
 2 **Order of the House of Deputies be amended (i) by striking the word *unanimous* and**
 3 **inserting the words *by two-thirds of the members present*; (ii) by striking the tenth**
 4 **sentence reading *For purposes of this provision, a unanimous vote is a vote with no***
 5 **~~member voting nay~~, and (iii) by amending the eleventh sentence by striking the words**
 6 **~~any lay or clerical deputation~~ and inserting the words *any three lay or clerical***
 7 ***deputations*.**

The Commission has been advised that some members of the House of Bishops are considering the adoption of a Rule of Order providing for a consent calendar in that House.

THE BLUE BOOK

With slight change in wording to replace the words "three lay or clerical deputations" with the words "three bishops," the amended Rule VI of the House of Deputies could be made applicable to the House of Bishops by the insertion of this Rule into the section of Daily Orders of the Rules of Order of the House of Bishops as a new paragraph VI with the renumbering of the succeeding paragraphs.

B. House of Deputies

1. Amendment to Standing Order I

Prior to the adoption of an amendment to Article I, Section 4 of the Constitution by the General Convention of 1970, Missionary Districts, later termed Missionary Dioceses, were entitled to representation in the House of Deputies by one clerical and one lay deputy. Consequently, Standing Order I of the House of Deputies provided for the seating of Deputies from Missionary Dioceses alphabetically in groups of four. Since 1970, when all dioceses, including those formerly known as "Missionary Dioceses," are entitled to representation by four deputies in each order this alphabetical grouping in Standing Order I is no longer necessary. The Commission recommends the adoption of the following resolution by the House of Deputies:

Resolution #A127

1 *Resolved, That Standing Order I of the Rules of Order of the House of Deputies be*
2 *amended as follows:*

3 **Prior to the meeting of each General Convention, the**
4 **Secretary of the House of Deputies shall determine, by**
5 **lot, the seats to be occupied by the Deputation from**
6 **each Diocese. ~~and Missionary Dioceses. Missionary~~**
7 **~~Dioceses shall be taken alphabetically in groups of~~**
8 **~~four, and, in the allotment, each group shall be treated~~**
9 **~~as one Diocese.~~**

2. Reduction in Size of the House of Deputies

As early as the General Convention of 1874 resolutions were proposed to study some form of proportional representation or to reduce the representation of each diocese from four to three deputies in each order. Although promptly tabled, this proposal for reduction has appeared with increasing frequency through the intervening almost century and a quarter.

For the past thirty years, up until the General Convention of 1991, this Commission proposed either a form of proportional representation or a Canon to reduce the size of the deputations from four to either three or two as permitted by the Constitution. Generally these proposals have been defeated by an overwhelming negative vote.

Therefore, this Commission submitted no proposal for reduction in its report to the 1991 General Convention and no resolution to achieve reduction was offered by any province, diocese or deputy.

The Commission is not unmindful of the fact that there are expressions of dissatisfaction with the size of the House of Deputies based upon the assumption that the size impedes the orderly process of business. This Commission again has voted unanimously to offer no resolution to reduce the size of the House of Deputies for the three reasons presented in the 1991 report:

- The present system provides for better and more inclusive representation for the dioceses and more reporting back to the dioceses of the work of General Convention.
- Reduction in size to three in each order or by proportional representation does not effectively address the question of unwieldiness.
- Such reductions would not result in appreciable financial savings.

In this report the Commission offers a fourth reason for not proposing a reduction in size. As heretofore stated, there are several proposals presently being made to expedite the business of the House of Deputies which, if adopted, may address the allegations, whether or not well-founded, that the size of the House is impeding the progress of business.

C. Unicameral Legislative Body

In view of current and significant studies on the structure of General Convention, the Commission does not favor consideration of a unicameral Legislative Body at this time.

II. Interim Bodies

A. Linking with Legislative Committees

Upon the recommendation of this Commission the Presidents of the two Houses have appointed the chairs of legislative committees at a much earlier date than in prior years and have encouraged the interim bodies to invite them to their meetings, most of which involve final adoption of Blue Book reports. This has established a liaison between the interim bodies and the legislative committees with the hope that a better understanding of the recommendations will result in more expeditious consideration of these proposals by the legislative committees during the General Convention.

B. Participation by Members

Without proposing a formal resolution on the subject the Commission unanimously adopted the following recommendation to the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies:

The Chairs of Standing Commissions will inform the appointing Presiding Officer of members who have failed to participate with a recommendation that the appropriate Presiding Officer write the member asking if the member wishes to continue on the commission. If the member fails to reply, such member will be replaced on the commission.

C. Joint Commission on HIV/AIDS

In reviewing the work of Joint and Standing Commissions established by General Convention, this Commission has concluded that the work being done by this Church in the fields of HIV/AIDS awareness and advocacy for care for the victims of HIV/AIDS and their families needs continuing emphasis and support. The worldwide nature of the HIV/AIDS crisis and its impacts upon all elements of society serve to strengthen the Commission's concern in this crucial area.

Accordingly, the Commission recommends to Executive Council that it create a commission of Executive Council to guide and undergird its efforts in program development and advocacy relating to the impacts of HIV/AIDS upon people everywhere. This Commission believes creation of such a commission by Executive Council will enhance the Council's educational programs and its communications and advocacy strategies, thus assuring that this Church is providing sustained leadership toward eliminating this scourge as well as pastoral care for those affected by HIV/AIDS.

To further strengthen the Church's ministries relating to the HIV/AIDS crisis, this Commission is recommending to the 1994 General Convention that its Standing Commission on Health be the venue for development of policy and legislative initiatives by General Convention as may be needed from time to time relating to awareness and understanding of HIV/AIDS and to this Church's engagement in effective education and advocacy efforts.

The Commission believes that if these actions are taken by Executive Council and the Standing Commission on Health, the Church's commitment to ministries in this area will be appropriately manifested and supported, and the Joint Commission on AIDS can be discontinued.

It should be noted that for the 1992-94 triennium, the program budget provides \$100,000 annually for HIV/AIDS ministry educational resources under Mission Operations and \$40,000 annually for the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition under Advocacy, Witness and Justice Ministry.

In making these recommendations this Commission is continuing its charge to assist General Convention in separating the functions of program development and advocacy by Executive Council from those of policy and legislative proposal development by the commissions of General Convention. Further, in a time of increasing pressure on budgetary resources, the Commission is striving to further, by these recommendations, approaches to ministry which are effective, efficient, and conform to canonically mandated functions and procedures.

Accordingly, this Commission submits the following resolution:

Resolution #A128

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, **That the Executive Council establish a**
- 2 **commission on HIV/AIDS whose duty it shall be to focus the Church's attention on the**
- 3 **theological, ethical and pastoral questions inherent in the HIV/AIDS crises; to develop**
- 4 **recommendations and strategies to increase awareness throughout the Church of the**
- 5 **HIV/AIDS crises; to facilitate communication with and among the several organizations,**
- 6 **institutions and programs engaged in HIV/AIDS ministries within and related to the**

1 **Church; and to advocate to the Church and to the world concern for those affected with**
2 **the HIV/AIDS; and be it further**

3 *Resolved, That the commission on HIV/AIDS shall consist of 1 Bishop, 2 Presbyters or*
4 **Deacons and 3 Lay Persons; and be it further**

5 *Resolved, That the commission on HIV/AIDS shall be a commission of Executive*
6 **Council; shall report annually to the Executive Council on its activities and progress;**
7 **and shall report to the General Convention in 1997 and thereafter.**

In the event the foregoing resolution is adopted creating an Executive Council commission on HIV/AIDS, this Commission recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolution #A129

1 *Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That Canon 1.1.2(n)(4) be amended by changing*
2 **the period at the end thereof to a comma and by adding the following: *including all***
3 ***aspects of the HIV/AIDS crises;*** and be it further

4 *Resolved, That Canon 1.1.2(o) be deleted.*

III. Bishops

A. Term of Presiding Bishop

After careful consideration and consultation this Commission is recommending that, effective at the close of the 1997 General Convention, the term of office of the Presiding Bishop be limited to nine years instead of the present twelve-year limitation. This recommendation is made because of the increasing workload and pressures on the Presiding Bishop. The Commission notes that many diocesan bishops are retiring well before the age of mandatory retirement, as further indication of the arduous duties of the office of a bishop having jurisdiction.

The Commission recommends the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolution #A130

1 *Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That Canon I.2.2 be amended by striking the*
2 **words ~~twelve years~~ in the third line thereof and substituting in lieu thereof the words**
3 ***nine years.***

B. Amendment to Canon III.22.1(c) - Biographical Information

In its report to the 1991 General Convention this Commission made several recommendations regarding consents by Standing Committees to the consecration of bishops-

elect. One recommendation was that there be included in the documents sent to Standing Committees by the Standing Committee of the Convention of the electing diocese a summary of biographical information relating to the bishop-elect. This amendment to the Canon was rejected by the House of Bishops for reasons unknown to this Commission. The recommendation made in that report was one of several resulting from requests by various Standing Committees to the Presiding Bishop for assistance in fulfilling their responsibilities regarding the giving of consents. This Commission is resubmitting this question by the following resolution:

Resolution #A131

1 Resolved, the House of ____ concurring, **That Canon III.22.1(c) be amended to read in**
2 **part as follows:**

3 **If the election of a Bishop shall have taken place more than three months**
4 **before the meeting of the General Convention, the Standing Committee of**
5 **the Diocese electing shall by their President, or by some person or persons**
6 **specially appointed, except as provided in Sec. 5 of this Canon, promptly**
7 **send to the Standing Committees of the several Dioceses a certificate of the**
8 **election by the Secretary of Convention of the Diocese, bearing a**
9 **statement that evidence of the Bishop-elect's having been duly ordered**
10 **Deacon and Priest and the certificates as to mental and physical**
11 **examination as required in Sec. 1(a) of this Canon have been received and**
12 **that a testimonial in the form set out in Sec. 1(a) of this Canon has been**
13 **signed by a constitutional majority of the Convention, and a summary of**
14 **biographical information relating to the Bishop-elect;...**

C. Criteria for Consideration by Standing Committees

In further response to the request of the Presiding Bishop to provide some guidance to Standing Committees in their consideration of giving consent to the consecration of bishops-elect, this Commission in its report to the 1991 General Convention recommended a list of criteria to be considered by Standing Committees. This proposal was rejected by the House of Bishops, but this Commission resubmits the following Resolution:

Resolution #A132

1 *Resolved*, the House of ____ concurring, **That Canon III.21.1(c) be amended by adding the**
2 **following new paragraph after the first complete paragraph of this clause:**

3 **The criteria set forth in Canons III.21.1(a) and (c) and III.7.12, the list of**
4 **offenses for which a Bishop may be tried under Canon IV.1, and the**
5 **capacity and demonstrated ability of the Bishop-elect to meet the**
6 **standards of the Declaration in Article VIII of the Constitution, are the**
7 **standards by which the Standing Committees shall determine the**
8 **qualification of the Bishop-elect before giving consent to consecration.**

IV. The Mexican Covenant

As directed by Resolution A235a of the 1991 General Convention, this Commission has considered the proposal that the five dioceses in Mexico create a separate province and withdraw from the Episcopal Church.

The Commission has received the draft of the Covenant Agreement approved by the Covenant Committee of the Episcopal Church and representatives of the dioceses in Mexico and the report of the Treasurer of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and the Executive for World Mission as to the estimated amount and duration of financial support to be required for the proposed province.

After consideration of these documents, it is the recommendation of the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church that the request of the dioceses of Mexico to withdraw from this jurisdiction of the Anglican Communion in order to form an autonomous province of the Anglican Communion be granted.

The Commission adopted the following statement as a recommendation to the Executive Council, to the Treasurer, and to the Executive for World Mission to apply to grants to be made to the new province in Mexico as well as similar grants to others in the future.

The principles contained in Canon I.7. shall apply to all grants and funds provided by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society to other jurisdictions.

V. The Archives

The Commission notes that Canon I.5. provides for the establishment of the Archives of the Episcopal Church and assigns to the Archives the purpose of preserving the records of the General Convention and of the Executive Council and "other records and memorabilia of the life and work of the Church, so as to further the historical dimension of the mission of the Church."

The Commission believes that implicit in the foregoing are the functions of designing and reviewing the implementation of records management systems for the General Convention and the Executive Council. Only by such involvement in records systems design and management can preservation work of the Archives be effective and efficient.

This Commission recommends that the Board of the Archives establish the foregoing as policy for the operation of the Archives. Further, the Commission recommends that the Board of Archives, reporting through the Executive Officer of the General Convention, be accountable to the General Convention and to the Executive Council for the proper discharge of these responsibilities.

VI. The St. Louis Symposium

The Commission was represented by three of its members at the St. Louis Symposium in August, 1993, which was conducted by the East Tennessee Initiative. An outgrowth of this meeting is *Shaping Our Future*, headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee, with the Rev. Jon

Shuler as Executive Director. He attended meetings of the Commission in November 1992 and 1993.

The Commission has been advised that Shaping Our Future has two goals:

1. That the Great Commission from the Gospel of Matthew be made the mission of the Episcopal Church, and
2. That there be reform of all the structures of the Church to accomplish that mission.

We also understand that this organization wants to be in partnership with every other responsible body in the Church as it perceives that there is a need to radically simplify the way the work of the Church is done. Not only is this Commission vested with canonical authority to study and make recommendations concerning the structure of the General Convention and the Church, but several other groups also are examining the structure.

VII. 1991 Resolutions Referred to the Commission

A. A143, Trustees of General Theological Seminary

The General Convention requested this Commission to study the requirement in the Constitution of the General Theological Seminary that a certain number of its Trustees be elected by the General Convention, and recommend to the 71st General Convention alternative ways of maintaining the link between the Seminary and the Church.

The Commission finds no reason to recommend change in this matter.

It is clear that this request stems from Resolution A142 (1991), which very appropriately places the travel expenses of those Trustees elected by the General Convention within the Expense Budget of the Convention. It is now clearly understood, and noted by the Committee on Nominations, that when required, such expenses are covered by the Seminary. At the present time there is no need to enact the provisions of A142 calling for travel expenses of Trustees elected by General Convention be included in the Expense Budget.

However, the Commission does recommend the following resolution to remove unnecessary language from Joint Rule VII.18(d):

Resolution #A133

1 *Resolved*, the House of ____ concurring, **That Joint Rule VII.18(d) be amended as follows:**

2 **(d) Trustees of the General Theological Seminary, serving in**
3 **lieu of the separate committees on the General Theological Seminary**
4 **of the two Houses.**

B. A235a, Autonomy Within the Anglican Commission

See IV. The Mexican Covenant above.

C. A237, Oversight of Interfaith Dialogue

The General Convention of 1991 charged this Commission to develop a recommendation for policy oversight of interfaith dialogue to be presented at the 71st General Convention. We believe it is best to utilize existing committees rather than to proliferate new committees. The Presiding Bishop's Advisory Committee on Interfaith Relations is the natural body for this responsibility. This can be implemented by the Presiding Bishop without the necessity for a resolution of General Convention.

D. A238a, Autonomy and Loss of Diversity

This Commission was charged by the 70th General Convention with consideration of the implications of the loss of diversity in our decision-making bodies due to processes of autonomy and to make recommendations to incorporate Anglican Partners into our decision-making. Although it initially appeared that a modification of House of Deputies Rule 60(a) might address the issue of loss of diversity, we came to believe that an approach that is both more local and more global would be a better way for the Church today. We propose that the dioceses of our Church find ways to include companion dioceses in their life and decision-making processes, on the one hand, and on the other that this issue be explored in the wider context of the Anglican Consultative Council.

The Commission also considered the question of amending Rule 60(a) to delete Liberia, and while the Commission believes this should eventually be done for consistency, the current political climate in Liberia does not make this a timely move.

E. B023a, Study of Composition and Function of the Committee on the State of the Church

It is this Commission's collective opinion that changing the composition and function of the Committee on the State of the Church would have a negative effect on the autonomy enjoyed by both Houses of General Convention.

The current practice of the House of Bishops producing a Pastoral Letter with input from the House of Deputies by access to the State of the Church report provides for indirect participation by the House of Deputies. It is understood that the Presiding Bishop is solely responsible for the opening address to Convention. Parochial reports in each diocese are available annually to each Diocesan, Coadjutor and Suffragan Bishop, providing at least a partial appreciation of the contents of the current State of the Church document. The House of Deputies has but one main vehicle, which is the State of the Church Document, to communicate vision and long range goals.

It is the opinion of this Commission that the autonomous nature of the above-stated document is significant and important beyond the composition of the committee which writes it. Because the existing structure allows for dialogue and consultation with any sources, including bishops, for the writing of the document, seeking additional members beyond the House of Deputies is unnecessary and conflicts with the intent of a bicameral structure.

THE BLUE BOOK

F. D112s Control Growth of Blue Book Resolutions

This resolution requested this Commission to study the coordination of the work of the interim bodies by the Executive Office of General Convention to minimize duplication of work and consolidation of proposed Blue Book Resolutions dealing with the same subject matter.

The Commission notes that Canon I.1.13 provides that the Executive Officer of the General Convention shall "coordinate the work of the committees, commissions, boards and agencies funded by the General Convention expense budget." Additional considerations regarding the tracking and consolidation of proposed Blue Book resolutions are being addressed by the newly created position of legislative secretary in the office of the Secretary of the General Convention. Further, this Commission has continued to advocate and track the development of the computerized databases undertaken by the office of the General Convention and by the Archivist. The Commission is advised that such a system should be operative for the 71st General Convention.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMING TRIENNIUM

1. Evaluate the present function and structure of General Convention and propose alternate models, if possible, to the next General Convention.
2. Study a possible reconfiguration of Provinces.
3. Further review of the consent process for Bishops.

FINANCIAL REPORT

	1992	1993	1994
Appropriated	\$15,400	\$11,000	\$2,600
Expenses	\$10,420	\$10,351	\$ 300*

*Estimated

PROPOSED BUDGET AND BUDGET RESOLUTION

The Commission estimates its costs for the next triennium as detailed below and submits the following resolution:

	1995	1996	1997
Meetings	\$19,000.00	\$19,000.00	\$2,000.00

Resolution #A134

Resolved, the House of ____ concurring, **That there be appropriated from the Assessment Budget of General Convention for the expenses of the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church, the sum of \$40,000.00 for the triennium 1995-97.**