

MISSION FUNDING TASK FORCE

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SUMMARY OF WORK

The 74th General Convention acknowledged that the Episcopal Church needs new fundraising strategies in order to complete the 20/20 initiatives (2003-A140). In response, the Executive Council was urged to create a Mission Funding Task Force to develop a comprehensive plan to raise new funds for mission. The Task Force was to revisit the prohibition against extra-budgetary fundraising for program initiatives, and formulate strategies to seek major gifts, cultivate major donors, and actively pursue foundation grants. The Task Force was created and funded at the Council's Burlington meeting in June 2004.

During the triennium, the Task Force met with many Church Center staff offices, representatives of agencies inside and outside the Church, the Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development, and a consultant. It concluded that a coordinated, multi-faceted, broad-based approach to our finances was needed. The Church should invite Episcopalians of financial abundance into the funding of ministry at all levels so that it can better engage and enhance its mission. God has given many people of financial abundance a vision for mission, but the Church has not provided enough opportunities for those persons to fulfill their callings. If we begin to focus continually on mission, develop creative approaches to giving, and forge innovative links between existing ministries, we can achieve the success that God has promised us.

It is important to talk about money when discerning God's call to mission and the Task Force believes that a formalized evaluation of mission funding is necessary given the Church's growing sense of mission and its current lack of encouragement towards major donors. Through actions taken at its Austin meeting in February 2005 and at its Louisville meeting in June 2005, the Executive Council established the Mission Funding Initiative as a component of the Office of the Presiding Bishop.

The Mission Funding Initiative is charged to "seek a variety of ways to further the mission and ministry of the Church, including funding through foundation grants." The Council also charged the Church Center staff to develop a mechanism for the review and approval of grant requests and to ensure their endorsement by the Presiding Bishop.