

# Standing Commission on the Mission and Evangelism of The Episcopal Church

## Membership

Ms. Ora Houston, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Texas, VII	2012
The Rev. Stephanie Spellers, <i>Co-Chair</i>	Massachusetts, I	2012
Ms. Megan Anderson, Secretary	Northern California, VIII	2015
The Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart, Jr.	Montana, VI	2012
The Rev. Canon Virginia Doctor	Alaska, VIII	2015
Mr. Sam Dorr	Kentucky, IV	2015
Canon John W. Goldsack, Esq.*	New Jersey, II	2012
The Rt. Rev. Duncan Gray III	Mississippi, IV	2015
The Rt. Rev. Julio Holguin	Dominican Republic, IX	2015
Mr. Donald McClain*	Milwaukee, V	2012
Ms. Micah McConnell*	Arkansas, VII	2015
The Rev. Deborah Royals	Los Angeles, VIII	2015
Mrs. Mary B. Stevenson	Georgia, IV	2015
Ms. Jane Cosby, <i>EC Liaison</i>	Pennsylvania, III	
The Rev. Canon John Anthony Guillén, <i>Staff</i>		

## Changes in Membership

There were three changes in the membership of the Commission this triennium: Mr. Donald McClain resigned the commission for personal reasons following the first meeting, and was replaced by Canon John Goldsack; and both Canon Goldsack and Ms. McConnell were unable to participate, and resigned their positions.

## Committee Representatives at General Convention

Deputy Ora Houston and Bishop Duncan Gray are authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to this Report.

## Summary of Work

“Insanity: Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.”

—Albert Einstein

The report that follows consciously departs from the standard form for reports to the General Convention. Because of our mandate, we felt we had no choice:

It shall be the duty of the Commission to identify, study and consider policies, priorities and concerns as to the effectiveness of The Episcopal Church in advancing, within this Church’s jurisdictions, God’s mission to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ, including patterns and directions for evangelism, Church planting, leadership development, and ministries that engage the diversity of the Church’s membership and the communities it serves, and to make recommendations to General Convention.

Given this charge – and the reality of our church’s continued, systemic decline – we could not submit a classic set of findings and resolutions, not if we hoped to help shift our church’s approach to mission and evangelism.

And shift, we must. The Episcopal Church performs stunningly well inside the box. Alas, the gospel and the locations within which we seek to live it out demand that we move both inside *and* outside the box. Jesus urges his followers to

lose our lives in order to find them, and all for the sake of the gospel (Mark 8:35). One way to embody that commitment, for us, is in the very body of this report.

You are best served by taking this written report in one hand and a device with access to the Internet in the other. Our report includes four brief yet illustrative videos, made from footage captured by our working groups as we traveled the Americas looking for the movement of the Spirit. There was no way to tell the story of our work over this triennium, or to propose the changes we believe are necessary, or to engage the wider communities with which we desperately need to reflect, without images and words that live outside of the Blue Book. The written report and video report can stand on their own but work best in tandem; for this reason, the video web addresses are listed in the corresponding sections of the report. And so we begin...

### **Work During the Triennium**

#### **Chicago, Illinois; November 18–20, 2009**

Members of the Commission gathered for the first time and established working definitions of “mission” and “evangelism”:

- **Mission:** “The mission of the church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ” (Book of Common Prayer, 855). “Mission is our response to God, stretching our personal and community boundaries to participate in God’s purpose to restore and heal all of creation” (2009 Blue Book report).
- **Evangelism:** “To share by word and example the Good News of God in Christ” (Book of Common Prayer, 306). Evangelism is sharing the love of Christ and the good news of God’s actions in our lives - the good news of the kingdom coming to life among us - in the language of the people, so that people can become disciples of Jesus Christ (2009 Blue Book report).

We then broke into working groups, each of which took responsibility for doing research, crafting strategy and building relationships around a specific priority area:

- *Culturally Appropriate Evangelism:* Identify and facilitate the development of culturally appropriate strategies to equip every member to be an evangelist (especially given racial, generational, linguistic, socio-economic, gendered and other cultural realities on the ground).
- *Culturally Appropriate Mission:* Identify and facilitate development of culturally appropriate strategies and models for mission, including liturgy and music, theological education, justice engagement and lay leadership development that are geared to meet the racial, generational, linguistic, socio-economic, gendered and other cultural realities on the ground.
- *Re-Imagining General Convention for Mission:* Craft a strategy that would help the church’s leaders to reimagine General Convention to balance legislative deliberation with a focus on renewal of the church, especially providing training and inspiration for mission and evangelism, engaging in mission in the host city, and drawing together wider networks of Episcopalians for learning and action.
- *Church Planting and Fresh Expressions of Church:* Identify resources and strategies for encouraging church planting and redevelopment and fresh expressions of church (*group merged into Culturally Appropriate Mission in summer 2011*).

#### **Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic - April 15–19, 2010**

The whole Commission reconvened, and working groups presented their tasks and visions. We were also blessed and inspired to witness first-hand the vibrant, multicultural and bilingual mission and evangelism taking place in the Diocese of the Dominican Republic. The Episcopal Church is clearly capable of taking new life in a variety of cultural contexts. Having seen proof with our own eyes, we were ready to enter into research and strategy mode.

Rather than set three gatherings of the commission-as-a-whole, the four working groups were given video cameras and tasked with organizing their own small-group site visits in the months ahead.

**Virginia - October, 2010:** The Culturally Appropriate Evangelism group met with students and leaders at Virginia Theological Seminary, with church planting and evangelism experts in the Diocese of Virginia and with several thriving churches in the Diocese.

**Minnesota - October 2010:** The Culturally Appropriate Mission group visited the Diocese of Minnesota, taking part in the Annual Convention and meeting with leaders of Native Ministries, with students and faculty in Luther Seminary's Missional Church program, and with local church leaders and members on a Sunday morning.

**Memphis - December 2011:** Throughout the triennium, members of the working group on Reimagining General Convention met with church groups and leaders who shared their concern to reshape governance in The Episcopal Church. They gathered a wider group of church leaders in Memphis to reflect on current proposals, with keynotes by priest and mission scholar Dwight Zscheile and The Rt. Rev. Stacy Sauls, Chief Operating Officer for the Episcopal Church Center.

The working group on Church Planting held fruitful conversations with church planting and redevelopment leaders throughout the Church, with great assistance from Thomas Brackett, Missioner for Church Planting and Redevelopment.

The full Commission also gathered via teleconferences and web conferences February 16, 2010; October 19, 2010; January 25, 2011; and September 1, 2011.

### **Canton, Mississippi - October 5–9, 2011**

The Commission held its final full gathering. In the first two days of that final meeting, we hosted a Consultation on Mission and Evangelism, welcoming key conversation partners to join in person or via video conference: The Rt. Rev. Stacy Sauls, The Rt. Rev. Mark McDonald, The Rt. Rev. Ian Douglas, Dr. Julie Lytle, Mr. Otis Gaddis, The Rev. Canon Jeunée Cunningham, The Rev. Canon Gregory Jacobs, Ms. Wendy Johnson, The Rev. Dr. Dwight Zscheile, and The Rev. Canon Dr. Gregory Straub. Together, we considered the issues most salient for our Blue Book Report, including culturally sensitive evangelism, launching new faith communities in strategic mission settings, training and ordaining local, mission-sensitive leaders, and refining General Convention to better gather, organize and equip the church for mission

The report that follows rises from these travels, conversations, consultations and—most importantly—our fervent prayer that the Spirit of Christ would reveal the truths we find it hard but necessary to bear.

### **Introduction: Moving Beyond Insanity**

**Video:** [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9V4v\\_FABO3I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9V4v_FABO3I)

I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, you will be guided into all the truth.

—John 16:12

### **This Is Reality**

The statistics grow more alarming with each year:<sup>1</sup>

- The median attendance in Episcopal congregations was 77 people in 2003, 72 people in 2006, 66 people in 2009. Will it be 60 in 2012?
- In 1965, we confirmed 128,000 people. In 2001, we confirmed only 34,000.<sup>2</sup>
- In 1965 there were 3,615,000 baptized members in the Episcopal Church. In 2001 there were 2,317,000. In 2009, there were 2,175,616.
- Our total Sunday average attendance has plunged in the last five years: from 765,326 in 2006 to 657,831 in 2010.<sup>3</sup>

If we wonder about the cause of the decline, we have to pay attention to the degree to which our membership has drifted further and further from the mainstream of America. Increasingly, we serve as a niche church for a shrinking segment of the American populace:

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1 Statistics gathered from “Episcopal Domestic Fast Facts Trends 2010,” compiled by Kirk Hadaway, Episcopal Church Center <[http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Domestic\\_FAST\\_FACTS\\_Trends\\_2006-2010.pdf](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Domestic_FAST_FACTS_Trends_2006-2010.pdf)>; and “Episcopal Congregations Overview: Findings from the 2010 Faith Communities Today Survey” compiled by Kirk Hadaway <[http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Episcopal\\_Overview\\_FACT\\_2010.pdf](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/Episcopal_Overview_FACT_2010.pdf)>.

2 Statistics from Episcopal Church Annual, compiled by William R. Coats in “Who (or What) Caused the Decline in Membership in the Episcopal Church?” <<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/dojustice/j325.html>>. Note: Figures rounded off.

3 “Episcopal Domestic Fast Facts Trends 2010”.

- The Episcopal Church is 92% white, 4% black, 2% Latino, 1% Asian and 1% mixed/other. America is only 70% white, but 12% Latino, 11% black, 3% Asian and 3% mixed/other.<sup>4</sup>
- 27% of our members have done graduate study, and another 52% have attended or finished college.<sup>5</sup> That's the highest concentration of educated people of any church in America. Statistics confirm that highly educated people and people of Northern European descent have fewer children.<sup>6</sup> Neither is either group known for its tendency to speak publicly about faith.
- Ours is an increasingly secular nation. 26% of Millennials (born 1981 or later) who are now teens and young adults have no religious affiliation. That tops the 20% of Generation Xers (those born 1965-1980) who were unaffiliated at the same age, or the 13% of Baby Boomers (those born 1946-1964) who had no affiliation at the same age.<sup>7</sup>
- The Episcopal Church's median age is 57. Given current trends, half of all Episcopalians will die in the next 18 years.<sup>8</sup>

While it does little good to obsess over the numbers, we cannot ignore what they're telling us. America has changed. The needs of the world have changed. The assumption of a Christian nation is no more. The assumption of a white, middle- to upper-middle class majority is no more. The assumption that we would soon be a 6-million member church—or even a national church that gathered all others under our wing—is no more. Our structures, policies, strategies and Book of Common Prayer are largely designed for contexts that either no longer exist, or simply no longer dominate.

The location in which God has placed us has already changed profoundly. Will we?

### Tradition + Context = Anglican

“All mission is done in a particular setting—the context. So, although there is a fundamental unity to the good news, it is shaped by the great diversity of places, times and cultures in which we live, proclaim and embody it.”

—The Five Marks of Mission in The Anglican Communion

The key, we believe, is to affirm the gifts of the church through the ages, even as we collaborate with new faith communities and emerging generations and cultures. We long to be more than a boutique church or a service provider to a “discerning audience, like NPR listenership,” as one church member remarked in a recent interview. God longs for us to be more: to be a community of disciples who bear the one, holy, catholic, apostolic faith in the language and culture of the people. If we don't do this, if we cede this particular mission and proclamation, who will do it?

Luckily, this calling is a natural for us. Meeting changing contexts while holding fast to what is essential—all this is in our DNA. What is it to be Anglican, after all, but to be part of the Christian family that:

- was born in the Church of England but has now taken root across the globe;
- seeks to live out Christianity that is catholic (or universal, able to speak to all contexts), apostolic (or consciously in the line of the apostles, the first ones sent to proclaim the gospel of Jesus); and
- is rooted in the wisdom, the culture and the language of local contexts.

As Ian Douglas asserts in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism*, our tradition is marked by “the embrace and celebration of apostolic catholicity in vernacular moments.”<sup>9</sup> We do church in the vernacular, the people's language – and the day we cease to speak in the people's language, to be a people of the Incarnation, is the day we cease being Anglican. Our call is to bring the rational together with the beautiful, head and heart, scientists and mystics, poets and politicians, words and

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4 *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Affiliation, Diverse and Dynamic* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2008), 76 <<http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>>.

5 *U.S. Religious Landscape Survey*, 85.

6 Kirk Hadaway, “Is the Episcopal Church Growing (or Declining)?”, 14 <[http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/2004GrowthReport\(1\).pdf](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/2004GrowthReport(1).pdf)>

7 “Religion among the Millennials,” Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life: General Social Survey (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2008) <<http://www.pewforum.org/Age/Religion-Among-the-Millennials.aspx>>.

8 Hadaway, “Episcopal Congregations Overview,” with further analysis by George Clifford, “Is the Episcopal Church going the way of the Grange?” Episcopal Café, April 2011 <[www.episcopalcafe.com/daily/episcopal\\_church/by\\_george\\_clifford\\_ample\\_evide.php](http://www.episcopalcafe.com/daily/episcopal_church/by_george_clifford_ample_evide.php)>.

9 Ian Douglas, “The Exigency of Times and Occasions” in *Beyond Colonial Anglicanism: The Anglican Communion in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Church Publishing, 2001) 35.

sacraments. We are united and transformed by sacraments and by common traditions, lived out afresh in every location and by every generation.

Global mission efforts have in more recent years incorporated the wisdom of sharing this generous Anglican tradition while embracing new contexts. It is time to bring the same wise counsel to our local mission, particularly as we create new faith communities that embody the gospel in changing settings.

### **Our Gift and Challenge**

We've effected this balance with the Disciples' Prayer Book<sup>10</sup>, created by indigenous leaders to birth a circle of believers with the gospel at the center. We've done it in new and redeveloped faith communities throughout the Church, especially in Province IX, which stretches to embrace much of Latin America. We've done it in rural and ethnic ministries, where teams proclaim good news and collaborate to lead congregations, rather than look to a priest as the only minister in their midst. We've done it in vibrant suburban ministries that have found ways to connect with families and present a viable option to soccer practice on Sunday mornings. We have all we need to become the church God calls us to be in this moment. We only need eyes to see *and* freedom from some limitations that threaten to stifle us.

One key barrier is our identification with empire. This dominating instinct is also in our DNA, and it assumes common prayer is one prayer in the master's language for all people, instead of the language of common people. Empire stops us from responding flexibly to our contexts and living out the gospel as true Anglicans.

Another barrier is fear. We wonder, "Can we be a coherent church with so much diversity?" The better question is, "Can we be a church without it?" Protecting our identity from "them" and building higher walls or more rigid structures will only take us further from the dream of God.

The legacy of empire and the fear of change—these old stories no longer serve us. We believe God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and love (2 Timothy 1:12). The concrete proposals that follow take us closer to that vision of a church that is passionate and urgent for God's mission, and willing to be (1) equipped for mission, (2) sent for mission, and (3) organized for mission.

### **Proposal #1: Equip the Church for Mission**

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXr-E6Orrnk>

"We're much more comfortable with bringing some more of 'them' in. Evangelism becomes a process of getting rid of cultural difference. The Word, instead of becoming flesh, becomes freeze-dried. It's as if we're afraid to let the gospel do what it does, so we're trying to control outcomes. In Native Ministries, we've met success in creating a circle, where the gospel is at the center, and the authority of a spirit person allows the gospel to become real in their context."

—The Rt. Rev. Mark McDonald, National Indigenous Bishop for the Anglican Church in Canada, co-author of the *Disciples' Prayer Book*

The 1990s were the Decade of Evangelism. Then, at the turn of the century, we unveiled the 20/20 Vision for doubling the Church's membership in 20 years. Each strategy was developed to assist congregations and dioceses as they sought to invite all people to experience God's amazing grace. Each effort aimed to increase membership and stem the flow of departing members. Research was done, data collected, programs funded to reverse the tide. But the decline continued.

Let's try "a new thing."

Congregations of all sizes strive to live into the Baptismal Covenant. The challenge is to do it with so many regional differences, demographics, worship styles, etc. We see that challenge as a great strength. The vision below assumes each Diocese and/or congregation can live into our baptismal promises and thrive, *if* we're equipped to respond as mission-hearted evangelists in our unique contexts.

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<sup>10</sup> Produced by Native Ministries and Gospel-Based Discipleship, Episcopal Church Center <[http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/NAM\\_a\\_disciples\\_prayer\\_book.pdf](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/documents/NAM_a_disciples_prayer_book.pdf)>

**Resolution A070 Develop a Multimedia-Based Evangelism Guide**

*Resolved*, The House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, that the 77th General Convention direct the appropriate Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society staff office to design and develop a multimedia Evangelism Guide to assist dioceses and local congregations as they participate in evangelism with groups who are under-represented in the domestic church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the guide include details about, but not be limited to: asset-based congregational development, tools for building relationships and an evangelism-focused church culture, the traditions and uses of storytelling, community organizing tools for connecting with the local community, and the history of the ethnic ministries in this Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 77th General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$30,000 for the implementation of this Resolution during the 2013–2015 triennium, including creation and distribution of the guide.

**Explanation**

Luke 5:4-6: “When he had finished speaking, Jesus said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’ Simon answered, ‘Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.’ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.”

As the Episcopal Church seeks to engage God’s mission, congregations and dioceses must pursue evangelism and mission that honors their unique community contexts, in partnership with populations who are under-represented in the local congregations, dioceses and throughout The Episcopal Church. This guide will set forth culturally, socially appropriate methods of evangelism to widen the Church’s reach.

It is expected that the ethnic missionaries of the Diversity, Social and Environment Team of The Episcopal Church Center will spearhead this effort in cooperation with other offices, including but not limited to Christian Formation and Young Adults & Campus Ministries.

**Resolution A071 Amend Canon III.8.5(g)(5)**

*Resolved*, The House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, that Canon III.8.5(g)(5) is hereby amended to read as follows:

(5) Studies in contemporary society, including the historical and contemporary experience of racial and minority groups, and cross-cultural ~~ministry skills~~ *training and cultural competencies with the following domestic ethnicities/cultures: people of Asian descent, people of African descent, people of indigenous/Native American descent, people of Latino/Hispanic descent, young people and sexual minorities.* Cross-cultural ministry skills may include the ability to communicate in a contemporary language other than one’s first language.

And be it further

*Resolved*, That the 77th General Convention challenge seminaries to develop at least one course or partner with another organization to provide students with cross-cultural training and competency; and be it further

*Resolved*, That each seminary in The Episcopal Church submit a report to the Standing Commission on the Mission and Evangelism of The Episcopal Church each year beginning in 2013 to document their work in this area.

**Explanation**

Luke 10:2: “And Jesus said, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.’”

Recent studies prove that the fastest-growing congregations in the Episcopal Church are those that intentionally invite and welcome other ethnicities and cultures to experience God's love. And yet, clergy and seminarians report that there is little adequate preparation around the canonical area "Contemporary Society." Seminaries can and should highlight cultural exposure and language acquisition, but appropriate formation for ordained leadership today must also include cross-cultural training. With this background, leaders can help communities to truly engage the cultures that will soon make up the majority of our mission field.

### **Resolution A072 Add Canon III.8(5)(h)(5)**

*Resolved*, The House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, that Canon III.8.5(h) is hereby amended to add subsection 5:

*(5) the practice of ministry development and evangelism.*

And be it further

*Resolved*, That preparation for ordination to the diaconate and priesthood, as well as preparation for people who serve as lay pastoral leaders (lay leaders of congregational teams), include achieving competency in the leadership arts of ministry development and evangelism, either by participating in training(s) or completing coursework that addresses the following skills: 1) understanding differences in cultural contexts, 2) storytelling as a practice for evangelism and community-building, 3) growing and facilitating the leadership of all God's people, 4) building teams of lay leaders, 5) identifying leaders and their passions and calling forth gifts, 6) building capacity in nonprofit organizations, and 7) engaging God's mission in the local community and in the world; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the College for Bishops provide training in ministry development and evangelism, addressing the above skill areas, within the triennium ending in 2015.

### **Explanation**

Ephesians 4:11-12: "So Christ gave [some] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

Whether they are based in a conventional ministry or an innovative one, today's church leaders simply have to be adept at building relationships, sharing faith stories, creating networks, understanding cultural context, growing the people's leadership and facilitating teams. Too many leaders enter ministry and discover they have little capacity in these critical areas.

The acquisition of these skills has been part of basic training for ministry developers, church starters and community organizers for decades, and it is now essential that they be incorporated into the training of those who lead our congregations and dioceses.

While there is no single Episcopal program for acquiring these skills, the following resources are recommended:

- 1) Public Narrative (New Organizing Institute),
- 2) Faith-Based Community Organizing (Industrial Areas Foundation, Gamaliel Network, PICO Network),
- 3) Total Ministry (Living Stones Partnership),
- 4) Circle Leadership (Indigenous Theological Training Institute),
- 5) Asset-Based Community Development (Asset-Based Community Development Institute), and
- 6) Facilitative Leadership (Interaction Institute for Social Change).

- 1) <http://neworganizing.com>,
- 2) <http://www.industrialareasfoundation.org>, <http://www.gamaliel.org>, <http://www.piconetwork.org>,
- 3) <http://www.livingstonespartnership.net>,
- 4) <http://www.indigenoustheologicaltraininginstitute.org>,
- 5) <http://www.abcdinstitute.org>, and
- 6) <http://interactioninstitute.org>.

### **Proposal #2: Send the Church for Mission**

**Video:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lk9LkpesI2Q>

"The real agenda in the Episcopal Church is not maximizing our participation in God's transformative activity. The real agenda, though generally unspoken and unacknowledged, is self and local congregation. Institutional and personal inertia, emotional attachments to buildings, and Churchmanship

modeled on the eighteenth and nineteenth century Church of England all represent substantial barriers to change.”

—George Clifford, “It the Episcopal Church going the way of the Grange?”

A small set of principles guides most global mission efforts to share the gospel in new communities: listen to the context where you’re based, build relationships with people, help them to name Jesus’ presence in their midst, grow faith communities that share the essence of the Anglican Way and grow disciples for Jesus in context.

Our neighborhoods and local settings have changed dramatically over the last few decades, and in many ways they are as foreign as a land thousands of miles away. Meanwhile, our Episcopal structures have remained fairly constant. Notice that our current Book of Common Prayer is nearly 40 years old. Notice that only 3% of Episcopal churches currently in existence were founded in the last 20 years. Something has to give. We are called to become evangelists who walk into our communities, passionate about the gospel of Jesus Christ and passionate about hearing how the Spirit has already been moving in these locations. We need to birth fresh expressions of Anglican tradition built on these deep relationships with neighbors in our rapidly changing local settings.

There is no reason to scrap all that we’ve known, done and loved. There is an urgent need to translate it, creating spaces that serve as “mission laboratories” where the ancient meets the future, where the traditions meet the margins. Those spaces can nurture innovation and relationship with underrepresented communities, and they can coexist alongside conventional churches in a way that fosters growth in both. In many mainline churches and traditions, there is a deep suspicion of innovation and going “off the grid.” That hesitation must now be balanced with a commitment to carefully create zones of greater flexibility and intention where we can try, fail or succeed, learn, and keep trying.

Leaders on the ground in every order (bishops, lay people, deacons, priests) told us they need two things: 1) designated evangelists to lead the way, like guides who know how to navigate rocky terrain; and 2) space for innovation – that is, agreement within a diocese to suspend certain conventional practices in a strategic location, followed by reflection on structures and canons. We can then revise those statutes, once it is clearer what structures would facilitate ministry in rapidly changing contexts.

We need to get missional ... at home. And we need to commit resources that prove this calling is a high priority. The 77th General Convention can lead the way. Hence, the two proposals that follow:

### **Resolution A073 Establish Diocesan Mission Enterprise Zones**

*Resolved*, The House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, that the 77th General Convention establish the Mission Enterprise Fund, to be administered by the Executive Council Standing Committee on Local Ministry and Mission, with \$1 million for the 2013–2015 triennium; and be it further

*Resolved*, That Diocesan Standing Committees and Bishops partner to create “Mission Enterprise Zones,” defined as a geographic area, as a group of congregations or as an entire diocese committed to mission and evangelism that engages under-represented groups, including young people, people of color, poor and working-class people, people with a high-school diploma or less, and/or people with little or no church background or involvement; and be it further

*Resolved*, That a Diocese may apply for a matching grant of up to \$20,000 from the Mission Enterprise Fund, to facilitate the development of the Mission Enterprise Zone; and be it further

*Resolved*, That congregational leaders in Mission Enterprise Zones participate in trainings around anti-racism, cross-cultural community development, and ministry development and evangelism, in order to gain

the skills to effectively build relationships with groups currently under-represented in The Episcopal Church but growing throughout our domestic mission field; and be it further

*Resolved*, That each Mission Enterprise Zone feature a strategic plan to start or redevelop a congregation that is intentionally multi-cultural, incorporating the presence and leadership of under-represented generations, socio-economic groups, races, ethnicities and/or languages; and be it further

*Resolved*, That for the period between the 77th and 78th General Conventions, these enterprise zones be created and be granted greater freedom as authorized by the Bishop in consultation with diocesan leadership regarding the designation of “congregation” status, traditional formation for and use of ordained leadership, and the use of authorized texts for principle worship gatherings; and be it further

*Resolved*, That diocesan leaders report to the Standing Commission on the Mission and Evangelism of The Episcopal Church the results of their efforts, including a description of the Mission Enterprise Zone and the process for creating the zone, the number and nature of new faith communities created, the number and demographic profiles of people associated with these communities, and the ministries established within the zone; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Standing Commission on the Mission and Evangelism of The Episcopal Church compile and reflect on these accounts and use them to fulfill the request of the Executive Council to help the Church “create a canonical process to incorporate new faith community models into our existing structures” by the 78th General Convention; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the 77th General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$1,000,000 to implement this resolution during the 2013–2015 triennium.

#### **Explanation**

“For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us.” Romans 12:4-6

Many local leaders have taken up the challenge to engage in mission in creative, culturally sensitive ways. They report that they need greater flexibility and permission, in collaboration with diocesan leaders, in order to pursue God’s mission appropriately. The action this resolution proposes would offer that flexibility.

Structures are important and necessary, but they must be flexible enough not to inhibit the proclamation of the gospel by faithful Episcopal communities, and they have to be re-evaluated as mission conditions on the ground shift. By creating these stations for mission enterprise, and then studying them, we will know what structures to create to recognize and encourage the growth of new and redeveloped faith communities.

In addition to the Mission Enterprise Fund, the dioceses will have access to resources available locally and from the Episcopal Church Center, to include but not be limited to research and demographic information, resources for evangelism, church planting and redevelopment, anti-racism, and ministry in different cultural contexts.

#### **Resolution A074 Identify and Deploy Lay Evangelists**

*Resolved*, The House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, that the 77th General Convention challenge each diocese, in accordance with Canon III.3.1(a) and Canon III.4.9, to develop a plan to identify, train and use the gifts of lay Evangelists in local settings; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the General Convention challenge each diocese to license the number of Evangelists equal to one quarter of the number of congregations in the diocese by 2015; and be it further

*Resolved*, That General Convention challenge each diocese to develop local evangelism training resources that match the cultural settings within which members will share the good news in word and deed.

### **Explanation**

Matthew 28:19-20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

By using the gifts of Spirit-filled, passionate, trained and licensed “evangelists” as seed planters, we trust that more members will grow as evangelists and thus grow our communities of faith into the fullness of the Body of Christ. Many people have the natural gift for evangelism, and with greater training and careful identification and strategic deployment, they can become the leaders who draw us all into this essential ministry.

### **Proposal #3: Organize the Church for Mission**

**Video:** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crad7Y6fJb0>

“We now live in an age of participatory networks rather than centralized bureaucracies. How can General Convention be reimaged to support learning, innovation, networking, and renewal among peers in mission at the grass roots? One of the hallmarks of Anglicanism is its adaptability as the context changes. Today is a moment calling for major adaptation if the church is to live into its name as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.”

—The Rev. Dr. Dwight Zscheile, From “General Convention in Context”(full text in the Appendix)

Given our Commission’s charge to “identify, study and consider policies, priorities and concerns as to the effectiveness of The Episcopal Church in advancing, within this Church’s jurisdictions, God’s mission,” we must address the urgent need to re-imagine General Convention and our Church governance structures so that they serve the mission of God.

At the 76th General Convention, President of the House of Deputies Bonnie Anderson and other leaders introduced the Public Narrative process as one way to tell our stories and encourage us to think and act missionally. The Presiding Bishop, in one of her sermons, said, “the heartbeat of the Church is mission, mission, mission.” Resolution 2009-A071 called for identifying and participating in Evangelistic Opportunities at the 77th General Convention. This passion for mission served as inspiration for our work. It also made us wonder how we could move even further.

By design, the General Convention is the largest gathering of the people of The Episcopal Church. This extraordinary opportunity should be used to empower and equip the Church and its leaders for mission and evangelism in God’s world by creating a balance between legislative deliberation and a focus on renewal of the Church. Imagine a General Convention that provides training and inspiration for mission and evangelism through intentional leadership training, sharing of “best practices”, storytelling, networking and engaging in mission in the host city—being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ: a community in action.

Such a gathering would change our Church, but we would first need to change the structure of General Convention and re-examine the organization of our Church.

To inform that change, we commend the brief statement “General Convention in Context.” We also propose the following resolution, our Commission’s contribution to the Churchwide conversation around structural reform:

### **Resolution A075 Restructure General Convention and Church Governance**

*Resolved*, The House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, there shall be a Task Force of the General Convention on Missional Structure and Strategy, the composition of which shall be at the discretion of the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies and the members of which shall be appointed

jointly thereby not later than 90 days following the adjournment of this 77th General Convention. The Task Force shall be charged with presenting a plan to the Church for reforming its structures, governance, administration, and staff to facilitate this Church's faithful engagement in Christ's mission in a way that maximizes the resources available for that mission at all levels of this Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, While acknowledging the historical legislative function of General Convention, serious consideration should be given to, but not limited by, more mission-focused models of General Convention that include the following: 1) Simplifying the structure of General Convention governance (e.g. unicameral legislature); 2) Training for evangelism, church planting, congregational development, storytelling and community formation; 3) Sharing of best practices and facilitating grass roots networks; 4) Catalyzing spiritual revival and renewal of the church; 5) Increasing the capacity to impact the host community in the Name of Jesus Christ; and be it further

*Resolved*, The Task Force shall endeavor to issue its report and recommendations along with resolutions necessary to implement them, including proposed amendments to the Constitution and Canons of this Church, so that they might be considered by a special General Convention prior to the convening of the 78th General Convention in 2015, but in any event, not later than February 1, 2015; and be it further

*Resolved*, The General Convention requests the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$100,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

#### Explanation

"Jesus proclaimed in the synagogue, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'" (Luke 4:18-19)

The administrative and governance structures of The Episcopal Church have grown over the years so that they now comprise approximately 47% of the church-wide budget and sometimes hinder rather than further this Church's engagement in God's mission. Reform is urgently needed to facilitate this Church's strategic engagement in mission and allow it to more fully live into its identity as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society in a world that has changed dramatically but is filled with extraordinary missional opportunity—if we are focused on meeting it.

### **Support for Other Work of the Church**

#### **Theological Education for All**

In collaboration with the Standing Commission on Ministry Development and Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Formation and Education, we urge the formation of a group responsible for studying and redesigning formation for ordination, with an eye to greater flexibility and responsiveness to various cultural contexts where mission and training occur. We need lay and ordained leaders who can walk with God's people and lead mission and evangelism that connects with the actual settings where God has called us to serve.

The Church needs to identify, call and nurture missional leaders—leaders committed to adapting forms of church and ministry in order to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to life in particular mission settings. We need pioneers who are fearless, creative yet pragmatic, rooted in context, ready to help communities to birth fresh expressions of Anglican tradition. The question is: How will we nurture these missional leaders? How will we remove blocks to identifying, calling and training them?

Recent changes to Title III of the Canons have helped tremendously by equalizing ordinations that follow traditional versus alternative tracks. Now we must re-evaluate our expectations for ministry formation, and to make even more room for local formation plans that do not depend on the traditional, residential three-year Master of Divinity. The Theological Education for the Anglican Communion working group has already produced a set of grids that provide

detailed, relevant standards applicable across many different contexts. We commend them for use by diocesan leaders in charge of formation and leadership development.

Finally, each diocese needs to re-evaluate the role of Commissions on Ministry. While these canonically mandated groups often serve as true companions in formation, they may also function as gatekeepers who block the calling and deployment of mission-focused and innovative leaders, by requiring preparation for a once-dominant church model that is less and less relevant or even present today.

### **Implementation of General Convention Resolution 2009-D038**

The 76th General Convention commended The Strategic Vision for Reaching Latinos/Hispanics as a model for planning mission strategy and called for a budget allocation of \$3,565,000 for the implementation of D038. However, huge cuts in the Budget resulted in a \$300,000 allocation. This amount was, of course, insufficient to carry out much of the resolution, but the Office of Latino/Hispanic Ministries made a bold effort to respond to the challenge and the opportunity.

The intent of the resolution was to demonstrate how detailed demographic reports, leadership training, training in cross-cultural awareness, and marketing and advertising resources directed at second- and third- generation Latinos/Hispanics (the fastest-growing segment of the Latino/Hispanic community in the United States) could produce viable congregational ministries that could help our church grow. Without the funding needed it was impossible to do this on a large scale; however, we did partner with several dioceses in their efforts to put the Strategic Vision into practice.

The resolution also called for developing tools and resources to assist with initiating new congregations, with training seminarians and clergy to gain language and cultural skills for ministry, and with marketing tools and media resources that will be easily accessible for use in local settings. Initiatives were launched in several dioceses, including Southwest Florida, Los Angeles and Idaho, but efforts in Nevada and Fort Worth truly stand out.

#### ***Diocese of Nevada***

In 2007, the Diocese of Nevada had one Latino ministry led by a priest who was un-paid and part-time. Due to the success of this ministry and the promise of the Strategic Vision, the Diocese of Nevada committed \$100,000 for the development of further Latino ministries in this diocese. In response, the Latino/Hispanic Ministry of The Episcopal Church offered an additional \$35,000 per year for the triennium as a pilot program to test the Strategic Vision.

In November 2011, we visited the Diocese of Nevada to 1) review the progress of their work at their first-year anniversary and 2) use the visit to videotape worship, activities and interviews for the purpose of creating a documentary report of this missionary endeavor. A year before, the diocese began new Latino ministries at two existing small English-speaking congregations in Las Vegas: St. Matthew's and St. Thomas'. Both Latino congregations have experienced growth of about 120%, and leaders are being raised and trained. Learn more about their story in the documentary, Latino/Hispanic Ministry: Transforming the Church in Nevada. **Video:** <http://vimeo.com/33761027>.

#### ***Diocese of Fort Worth***

The Diocese of Fort Worth is in the process of initiating its first new Latino congregation and will be doing so with support from Latino/Hispanic Ministries, following the precepts of the Strategic Vision. In November, Staff Officer Rev. Anthony Guillén made a presentation at the diocesan convention of the Diocese of Ft. Worth about an initiative to establish a new ministry at St. Elisabeth's in Fort Worth. To assist this new mission the Office of Latino/Hispanic Ministry offered \$20,000 from the D038 funds. See the report on Rev. Guillen's presentation and video about the effort:

- <http://episcopaldiocesefortworth.org/newsindiocese/112411%20-%202011%20convention%20wrapup.htm>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pHLY3dkQK4>

#### ***Manual of Church Planting and Revitalization***

In addition to supporting these diocesan initiatives, D038 requested a step-by-step manual of how to effectively engage in Latino/Hispanic ministry. In order to create this resource, 20 clergy from successful congregations gathered in October 2011 for "Adelante: Moving Forward in Mission," a preconference to the "Everyone Everywhere Domestic and Global Mission Conference." Leaders were divided into small groups and spent two days using audio and video equipment to interview each other and capture wisdom around best practices for Latino congregational development. Transcriptions of these interviews, along with video, will be used to create a manual that will likely include a video library, online resources and print documents.

### ***Course for Latino Ministry Competency***

The Latino/Hispanic Ministry has designed the curriculum for a two-week course to equip seminarians, clergy and lay leaders to comprehend the many facets of Latino/Hispanic ministries in The Episcopal Church. The course provides foundational elements to enable church leaders in Latino Ministry in the United States to gain awareness and understanding of the diverse Latino cultures, with sessions on Latino History, Spirituality, Social Issues and the Strategic Vision. The course, which will be held at least twice a year, will provide classroom instruction and on-site engagement with Latino leaders of diverse backgrounds.

### ***Times Square Ad***

On November 17, 2010, a 35-foot by 32.5-foot advertisement was placed on the Reuter's Building in Times Square. The image featured a loving family from a Latino congregation in Los Angeles with the words "La Iglesia Episcopal les da la bienvenida" (The Episcopal Church Welcomes You). The placement of the ad was timed to be displayed as the Nuevo Amanecer conference at Kanuga came to a close. The ad cost nothing, as it was a door prize at a conference on social media and Hispanics. The ad is available for download for local use, along with other marketing materials being created in partnership with the Office of Communication.

### ***Episcopal Web Radio Network***

The Episcopal Web Radio Network is now available on the Episcopal Church website and will eventually provide 24-hour radio programming that will attract all levels and ages of Latinos in the United States and Latin America. This network will collect in one place current radio programs and "stations" that provide anywhere from short 5-minute meditations to hour-long talk shows, to 24-hour music and variety programming in both the U.S. and abroad (though there are many more in Latin America). The Episcopal Web Radio brings together the best of these efforts in a well-designed radio network that will reach non-Episcopalians as well as those within the church. This initiative is being done in cooperation with the Office of Communication.

### **Actions on Resolutions Referred to the Commission**

#### **Reconciliation Training (Resolutions 2009-A086 and 2009-A039)**

After further research by members of our Commission, we have determined that the Church's reconciliation resources are complete and no further action needs to be taken.

#### **2009-A163: Mandate on NEAC AIDS Tutorial**

Members of the Commission agreed to take this tutorial online at [www.neac.org](http://www.neac.org).

## **Budget Report**

The Commission was budgeted \$36,000 for the 2010–2012 triennium. At the time of this report, the Committee had spent \$23,307.74 (\$8,972.24 in 2011, and \$14,335.50 in 2010). In addition, at the close of 2011, the Commission anticipated expenses of \$1,780 for the creation of the report video.

The relatively modest spending on Commission travel was due, in part to one working group's lack of activity and another's decision to cancel a trip; had they proceeded as planned, expenses would have been closer to \$30,000, with \$6,000 remaining for the next Commission to begin its work at the start of the 2013–2015 triennium. For this reason, the Standing Commission on the Mission and Evangelism of The Episcopal Church will require \$36,000 for meetings and other expenses for the 2013–2015.

## Appendix

### **“General Convention in Context” by The Rev. Dr. Dwight Zscheile**

*What does a missionary Episcopal Church need from its General Convention?* This is an urgent question today as the church seeks to embrace a new missionary identity in an increasingly post-Christian and pluralist society. General Convention as currently configured is shaped by several previous eras in the church’s history that differ markedly from our own.

General Convention’s roots lie in the creation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the new United States, when independence from the Church of England required a unifying structure. General Convention was created as a governing body of member dioceses to reflect the federalist structure of the new U.S. Congress. The division into the two Houses of Bishops and Deputies mirrored the bicameral structure of Congress, but it was also a way to resolve the competing visions of a more clerical northern party (led by Samuel Seabury) and a southern/mid-Atlantic party that sought greater lay participation. General Convention’s early purpose was to create the basic unifying documents of the church—the *Book of Common Prayer* and *Constitution and Canons*. Its purpose for much of the next century was to encourage mission in the expanding frontier and overseas. Mission was understood within the establishment paradigm largely as taking place primary somewhere else—where the church was yet to be geographically established.

In the early to mid-20th century, the Episcopal Church began to take on a more centralized structure reflecting the growing corporate bureaucracies of the day. The office of Presiding Bishop became full-time, and a large national staff was assembled. However, as the church began to decline amidst the cultural upheavals of the 1960s, this organization came under stress. The response on the part of the General Convention and other churchwide structures was to adopt the posture of a regulatory agency, seeking to exercise greater control and standardization of ministry within the church.

Today’s General Convention, with its many dozens of commissions, committees, boards, and agencies, largely reflects the mid-20th century bureaucratic, regulatory paradigm for American denominations (Episcopalians aren’t alone in this). Yet Episcopalians increasingly recognize that the primary mission field today is local—in their own neighborhoods, not just somewhere far away. The focus on legislation and programs at the national level is a carryover from an establishment age in which the denomination carried out mission largely somewhere else on behalf of the local church, rather than through ordinary members. This disconnect has eroded trust, and with it the flow of resources from the grass roots to the diocesan and national levels.

We now live in an age of participatory networks rather than centralized bureaucracies. How can General Convention be reimagined to support learning, innovation, networking, and renewal among peers in mission at the grass roots? One of the hallmarks of Anglicanism is its adaptability as the context changes. Today is a moment calling for major adaptation if the church is to live into its name as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society.

For additional reading, see *People of the Way: Renewing Episcopal Identity* (New York: Church Publishing, 2012) <<https://www.churchpublishing.org/products/index.cfm?fuseaction=productDetail&productID=9537>>