

Budgetary Funding Task Force
Maritime Institute of Technology, Linthicum, Maryland
Minutes
October 21-22, 2010

Participants: Jim Waggoner (chair), Anne Brown, Maria Campbell, John Goldsack, Matilda Kistler, Mike Klusmeyer, Ernesto Medina, David Quittmeyer, Stacy Sauls, Steve Smith, Sandra Swann

The Task force began its meeting at noon on October 21, continued meeting that evening, and concluded at noon on October 22. The meeting began with prayers, updates from Task Force members, and a Bible reflection led by Chair Jim Waggoner on Matthew 16:1-4.

Minutes: Matilda Kistler moved and Stacy Sauls seconded approval of the minutes of the June 7-8 meeting at the Fogelman Center, with a correction to ensure quoted material from Resolution 2003 B-004 is accurate. Motion passed unanimously.

Committee on the State of the Church: Matilda Kistler reported on the committee's work and shared handouts of current research, including the latest "Fast Facts," which shows a decline in membership of 110,000 between 2007 and 2009, with a less rapid decline in average Sunday attendance. "Easy to Decline, Harder to Grow" lists factors involved in both decline and growth. She noted that there is a large gap between 35 and 55 in clergy ages. Information is needed on seminarians. "Who is going to be there when all of the older ones retire?"

A discussion followed on what the statistics say about funding the church.

Presentation by Stacy Sauls

He began by reviewing the proposal he had presented at the previous meeting, with some revisions. Some of his comments:

I believe the people of TEC want to fund the mission of TEC, but they don't feel they are doing it except in their parish. The system we have is currently broken. The seminaries are an example of not getting out in front of what is going on in the world. It is incumbent on the church to get out in front so we can do more than just react.

We can preserve our ethos, but by reducing what we spend on governance, we will make more available for mission at the wider level as well as at the local level.

The current budget is not an expression of our polity. It is driven by the staff — not to criticize them, for they were doing what they were given to do, but they rearrange to fit the mission priorities.

The proposal is to simplify and streamline

What are church-wide functions? What we came to at last meeting:

- Domestic mission
- World mission
- Promoting justice and peace
- Anglican, ecumenical and interfaith relations
- Administration and finance for mission
- Governance (not the beginning point)
- General Convention

- Executive Council
- Board of Directors of the DFMS

Standardize those across the church.

Other elements of the plan:

- Have Executive Council (EC) and standing commissions meet twice a year, General Convention meet every 5 years.
- Separate out the fiduciary responsibilities of caring for the church's property and make the DFMS board responsible for them.
- EC would be the policy and program body, using funds the DFMS board would make available.
- Program staff connected to term of PB.

I think the aim was to present the concept to GC and have the proposal worked out in the subsequent triennium. Since last meeting, I have been concerned that that will not work and have prepared initial drafts of canons to implement the plan.

Proposed meeting of stakeholders

In response to a question, Jim Waggoner said he had not been able to make a meeting of stakeholders happen. The system for setting up meetings in the General Convention Office is not set up for such a meeting of people from several groups and on short notice.

The group discussed the concern on the part of some that we have a "secret plan," a sense of frustration that there is not any coordination among the groups proposing changes, and that the deputies do not have the same opportunity the bishops have, given that they meet twice a year, to work together.

Ernesto Medina said, "I am fantasizing about gathering every two years. How can relationships be developed that do not unbalance the power? In the radicalness of what we are doing, I want everything up for grabs."

Continuation of Stacy Sauls's Presentation

Sauls presented Guiding Principles, proposed changes to the Canons and the Constitution, and an outline of "things left undone." On Thursday evening and Friday morning, the Task Force discussed the document, resulting in several revisions.

Some points made during the Thursday evening discussion:

- Do we have a shared understanding of governance? We gather every three years in a representative, open process to determine program and budget for the church. An important element is the balance between the two houses.
- The current budget is separated into three parts: canonical, corporate and program. The canonical section is where one can look for governance.
- A challenge that we have not gone far enough: It is still top-down hierarchy, with the Church Center parceling out what gets done. Sauls has a dream that we would turn the mission of the church, making Jesus known, to the parishes and have it be bottom up. The people doing the work inform the top. How to invite them into the process.
- How are mission priorities determined? In the case of the MDGs, the priority bubbled up from below.

- The structure of mission areas harmonized among levels is appealing in terms of efficiency and clarity.
- The Church Center should concern itself only with the essential governance issues, and the rest of the resources should be driven down to the dioceses and even parishes.
- We need “network enablers” at TEC level who can help people make connections but do not necessarily *do* program.
- Are there possibilities for the non-bishops to come together more often?

Stacy Sauls said the intention was to create a structure that pushed more money back down to the most local level possible, because that is where the people of God do the work of God. “I am hearing that it went part of the way but not as far as we needed. I am hearing that the need is to keep as much program at the most local level possible.”

Some points made during the Friday morning discussion:

- Can we require by canon that dioceses have a certain structure?
- The next step should be a polished concept paper rather than precise canonical language.
- Revision of the guiding principles (see last page of minutes).
- The proposal needs some sort of preamble.
- In terms of organization and administration, one might use the image of a Celtic knot. It is about interconnectedness, not linear. The church needs to look like an incarnational internet.
- The possibility of more frequent, but not necessarily always legislative, gatherings for General Convention. It might be a marriage of something like ECW Triennial and a legislative session and meet in a university campus sort of environment.
- Meet in the less formal, more ministry fair sort of gathering every two years and have the regular legislative gathering every 4 years, with deputies the participants at both.
- Or, ministry fairs, possibly with a brief legislative session, can be done more effectively on a provincial level, but GC should meet every three years.
- Or, in a two-year model, both houses could meet. Do some legislative work at both, but the one every fourth year would have more formational work.
- There is a tension in having staff report to one of the presiding officers, with salary and evaluation being done by that arm of DFMS.
- Should the executive director report to Exec Council rather than to PB?

Next Steps

Stacy Sauls will distribute the changes made to his document.

Identify continuing sub-groups

- Preamble and principles
 - Maria will head, John, Anne Brown
- Organization for mission
 - Sandra will head, Steve, Anne, Stacy
- Role of PB
 - Jim will head, Ernesto and Steve
- Collaborative meetings
 - Ernesto will head, Matilda, David, Mike

- Funding formula and budget process
 - Sandra will head, Steve and David
- DFMS
 - Matilda will head, Maria, John
- Things left undone
 - Stacy will head, John

Each section of the report would have an introductory paragraph explaining the rationale and then develop some language for canon change. Do bullet points of changes.

Jim Waggoner will schedule a conference call.

Deadline for doing sub-group work: By December 1
Things left undone to have later date

The goal is a document to invite others into conversation.

Ernesto Medina suggested that a letter be sent to other groups saying, “Here is what we are thinking, and we would like to know what you are thinking as we draft BB reports so we don’t have a train wreck.” We need to be completely transparent and as truthful as possible.

Maria Campbell said we should get a report about this meeting that talks about the energy and the areas we are considering and that we are going to be doing further work and share that. Also invite others to share work that may be in same area.

Jim and Maria will work on a letter.

Proposed meeting dates
Conference Call December 17, 2010, 11 am EST
Meeting April 26-27, 2011
Meeting October 18-19, 2011

Submitted by Anne Clarke Brown, Secretary

Guiding Principles

- The people of the Church want to support the mission of the Church.
- We are a church that trusts her people, ordained and lay.
- The treasures of the Church are the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the outcast and the vulnerable.
- Effective forms follow function.
- Funding needs to follow Mission.
- Church-wide structures will exist to support local Mission and ministry.
- Opportunities for participation in both mission and governance are enhanced the more local the level of participation
- The more local the ownership and participation and the clearer the goal, the more participation, the more diversity, the more generosity.
- The work of the Church is to empower the people of God to participate in Mission.

- The Mission of the Church is best served by allocating the most possible resources at the most local level.
- Bottom up is better than top down.