

## **Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution, and Canons**

May 31, 2019 3:30pm ET via Zoom

Present: Sharon Alexander (Chair), Sean Rowe (Vice Chair), Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Valerie Balling, Nancy Cohen, Michael Glass, Richard Edward Helmer, Mike Klusmeyer, Luz Montes, Bill Powel, Adam Trambley, Sally Johnson (representative of President of House of Deputies), Mary Kostel (representative of the Presiding Bishop), Jane Cislucyis (Executive Council liaison), Molly James (General Convention Office).

Not in attendance: Annette Buchanan, Carmen Figueroa, Wendell Gibbs, Christopher Hayes, Ryan Kusumoto, Tom Little (Secretary), Jake Owensby, Jamal Smith, Marisa Tabizon Thompson.

**Opening Prayer:** Valerie Balling opened the meeting with prayer at 3:34, remembering Tom and his son Thomas.

### **Preliminary Matters**

- *Assistant Secretary:* Sharon noted that we had an assistant secretary in the past, and it would be helpful to have one again. She nominated Adam Trambley. There were no other nominations. Adam was elected by acclamation.
- *March Minutes:* Carmen noted that she was not at the meeting. Sharon moved that the March Minutes be approved with that change.
- *Confirm Subcommittee Membership:* A new subcommittee list was circulated. All were encouraged to double-check their names to ensure we had the right subcommittees and everyone was receiving the information they should be receiving.
- [Website/Blog for SCSGCC for resource sharing](#) with TEC (input welcome): We have a website draft for purposes of sharing information from the Standing Commission.

### **Items from Subcommittees**

- a. General Convention and Rules of Order:  
Michael Glass shared a list of proposed improvements to General Convention that have come from the subcommittee. This list came from a group meeting after convention and incorporated some of Adam's ideas, which overlapped in many areas. The subcommittee hopes to have the whole Commission approve

the list and send it back to the Subcommittee to work on implementation. Molly noted that GCO staff had already talked about moving the deadline for canonical and constitutional changes in Blue Book reports to a much earlier date. One of the issues we need to take to GCO very soon is to get money allocated and spent to update software.

The Subcommittee moved that the Standing Commission direct the Subcommittee to implement suggestions in the subcommittee document by drafting canons and rules of orders, supporting the GCO, and by preparing other documents as necessary for later approval by the Commission as a whole. Motion carried.

Bill Powel asked a question about amending the Rules of Order, which Michael Glass clarified as needing to be changed at General Convention.

b. Ecumenical – Sharon Alexander:

Sharon reported that currently the most significant issues are the relationship with the United Methodist Church, which is unclear until after the next UMC General Conference. One of the issues is the question of what it means to have interchangeable clergy with the Lutherans and potentially the Methodists. There are a number of ecumenical documents that have not been widely shared in the past. Sharon wants to review them to ensure that they are not in conflict with Title III. Sharon will post these documents on the Extranet.

c. Bishops and Dioceses - Adam Trambley

Adam said the Subcommittee had prepared a report on Mutual Ministry Review of bishops and dioceses and was looking for feedback from the Commission.

Jennifer noted that OPD like the idea and bishops she has spoken to are positively inclined. Molly noted that Tom Brackett has an on-line tool (Faith X) that incorporates all sorts of demographic and vitality data around church planting that could potentially be expanded to all dioceses and be helpful at the 30,000' level.

Nancy asked how many dioceses do MMR. Jennifer said that they are in many MMR provisions in Letters of Agreement, but the compliance may not be there. Sally noted that some dioceses don't have Letters of Agreement.

Richard asked about what would go into Canon and what would be best practices.

Nancy wondered if the MMR would dig deep if the information was passed out publicly.

Jennifer said that in Indianapolis there was clarity of what would go into an Executive Summary that went out to the world, but then a fuller report was kept in Diocesan files and sent to OPD. There aren't a lot of people doing this work, so if we get a framework, perhaps these few practitioners can dig into some of the details.

Valerie noted that they did the MMR, and they had concerns about the length of questions to ask. Their limit was 30 questions, which was considered too many.

Richard noted that the less investment bishops and leadership have, the less likely the process is to succeed. His concern is that if something is very detailed, it will be difficult to get investment. A loose framework that can be adapted in each diocese will be more helpful.

Sean said that CREDO did a pilot project for bishops, and they had a start on an MMR process. Gay Jennings was working on it. At the time, no one on faculty had had an MMR. Then CPG decided not to go forward with that program.

Gay Jennings has led MMR processes for the dioceses of Chicago, Newark, and Connecticut. She just completed the fourth Mission Leadership Review in Connecticut (as it is called in CT). Using the same process affords the ability to look at issues, challenges, leadership, and opportunities longitudinally over time.

Sally asked if this was being looked at structurally or canonically. Last Convention some of the canonical language didn't pass. Adam noted that the subcommittee was bringing this forward in part to get advice about the best way forward. Sally said that there were some discussions over last triennium about whether the OPD would be involved at all in this area unless it was part of the work with an individual bishop. Jennifer noted that this was part of the issue of episcopal transitions. Mary said the OPD did deal with the larger health of dioceses at times.

Jennifer noted that the goal was to build data over time on a dioceses as it prepared for a transition process. By doing this over time, we will have information that would not be available if it was all done at a single point in time. This does presume some healthy practices in dioceses, and an MMR is one of those practices.

Richard asked if the information here might dovetail with the information collected by the State of the Church committee. Jennifer talked with a representative from there and saw a value in collaborating. Sean is on that committee and can help connect, as well.

Mary asked if there was overlap with the OPD Task Force. Sally said that Bishop Todd Ousley has a full plate and the Task Force is trying to help with best practices in the bishop transition process. The existing system that has been in place for a number of years is stressed due to lack of staffing. Sally felt there was not a lot of overlap.

Michael asked the Subcommittee to show how this fits our Commission mandate and to ensure that no other Task Force is working on this. Is the role of the Commission to help another group working on this make a canonical change that they want to make? Richard noted that if there was a canonical change, he would want to keep it simple.

Jennifer noted that there may be foundational work on Letters of Agreements before moving an MMR. Michael said that he would feel more comfortable with putting a LoA in canons before putting MMRs in canons.

Michael asked Molly to post the list of the Task Forces this triennium. Molly provided it:

[https://extranet.generalconvention.org/governing\\_and\\_interim\\_bodies/interim\\_bodies](https://extranet.generalconvention.org/governing_and_interim_bodies/interim_bodies)

Molly also noted that: Resolution A144 was referred to all dioceses post GC:  
<https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/A144?house=hd&lang=en>

Sally noted that any work about Diocesan vitality and restructuring would be important work for this Standing Commission. Sean agreed.

Sharon will also pull some pieces from the Task Force on the Episcopacy's Blue Book report.

d. Canonical Changes – Michael Glass.

Michael will soon convene the subcommittee, which will work on some of the changes in the General Convention and Rules of Order report. Sharon noted that there were other ideas that came from Paul Ambos and others that she is looking at. Mary has some odds and ends, but will also be part of the subcommittee.

- e. Churchwide Structures – Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows.

No new information to report at this time.

- f. Formation – Valerie Balling.

Valerie noted that the question of how this fits our Commission's mandate is relevant and there is another Task Force looking at similar questions. We don't want to reinvent the wheel and will be in contact with other groups. Committee may end up with a report instead of resolutions. One question they have asked has to do with membership requirements. Sharon will be asking that question of some ministry communities in Texas while she is traveling. Valerie added that there were questions of formation of clergy and what it takes to do the job, and how to have consistency in ministry formation as local ministry programs increase. GOEs were meant to do this, but may not be doing so now.

- g. Title IV – The Title IV committee has not yet met.

- g. Executive Council – Jane Cislucyis

Jane talked about the Executive Council by-law review to ensure that they corresponded to canons. Jane is working with an Executive Council committee to review and will be connecting with the Standing Commission. Sharon expressed gratitude for keeping up apprised of Executive Council information we need to know.

**Blue Book:** Sharon noted that we need a way to know what other Task Forces are doing that we may need to work on. Sharon asked whether it was worth having liaisons with Task Forces to see about constitutional or canonical changes they may propose. Michael suggested looking at the list of Task Forces and contacting them and asking for minutes. Molly said there are about 20 Task Forces meeting with us in the fall, including most of the Task Forces likely to write canonical change resolutions. This meeting may include orientation about writing Blue Book reports and submitting canonical changes in a timely way. Nancy and Sharon thought that earlier contact with them would be better, and getting their minutes might be a good first step. Michael suggested reminding them of our mandate, and recommended a generic email from Sharon in the coming weeks.

### **Scheduling of upcoming meetings**

Quarterly Zoom Call – August: A doodle poll will be sent out.  
September 29-October 2, 2019 at Maritime Institute in MD

2020 meeting: April 21-24, 2020.

**Other New Business:** There was no new business

**Closing Prayer & Adjourn:** Sharon offered a closing prayer at 4:55 and adjourned the meeting.