

House of Deputies
Committee on the State of the Church

May 16-19, 2007
New York City

The House of Deputies' Committee on the State of the Church met at the Episcopal Church Center in New York City from Wednesday, May 16 through Saturday, May 19. Those members present were:

Al Price, *Chair*
Debby Melnyk, *Vice-chair*
Kathryn W McCormick, *Secretary*
Cindi Bartol
Arthur Bjontegard
Andrew Cooley

Chip Davis
Ann Fontaine
John Goldsack
Maggie Tinsman
Hillary Raining
Martin Yabroff

Member absent: Ashton J. Brooks

The SOTC began three days of meetings with designated persons at the Episcopal Church Center and other affiliated groups in the New York area. Prior to the meeting, questions were sent to the persons to be interviewed:

- What are the trends?
- Long-term results of “events”?
- Seminaries and ministry development (ordained and lay)
- What are the challenges?
- What are the opportunities?
- What are the threats/pitfalls?
- What successes have you had?
- What resources have you produced, know about that would help us do our job?
- What is your vision for the ministry of the Church?
- How do you separate the wheat from the chaff?
- What is going well?
- In your area of responsibility, what do you see as the 2 or 3 major challenges and opportunities facing TEC today?
- What do you believe are the 2-3 most effective tools we have available now to advance mission and ministry?

The SOTC met with the following:

- Mission Leadership Team for ECC
 - The Rev. Chris Epting: *Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations*
 - The Rt. Rev. George Packard: *Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies.*
 - Ms. Janine Tinsley-Roe: *Native American Ministries.*
 - The Rev. Jim Lemler: *Director of Mission.*
 - Canon Margaret Larom: *Anglican and Global Relations.*
 - Mr. Thom Chu: *Director, Ministries with Young People.*
 - Mr. Robert Williams: *Director of Communication.*
 - The Rev. Rebecca McLain: *Deployment Office.*
 - Ms. Linda Watt: *Chief Operating Officer.*
 - Mr. Robert Radtke: *President, Episcopal Relief and Development*
- Mrs. Bonnie Anderson: *President, House Of Deputies.*
- The Rev. Margaret Rose, *Women's Ministries*

- Mr. Matthew Price, *Church Pension Group*
- Mr. Kirk Hadaway, *Episcopal Church Center*
- Ms. Terry Parsons, *Stewardship*
- The Rev. Suzanne Watson, *Small Church Ministries*
- Canon Margaret Larom, *Anglican And Global Relations*
- The Rev. Dr. Gregory Straub, *Executive Officer And Secretary To General Convention*

COMMITTEE WORK

Meeting locations

- Meet with the Committee on National Concerns
- Meet in New Orleans or Mississippi to learn first hand about Katrina rebuilding

Meet in Washington, DC

The Committee divided into three groups to discuss 1) the positives; 2) the critical issues 3) where to we go from here. The results of that work:

The Positives:

- UN status of women's strength in different voices: "Commitment to unity that does not require conformity"
- The passion of mission as a natural link to Anglican identity and healing.
- Growth in ERD – Number of donors up, number of parishes up, foundation & corporate donors up, total receipts up.
- Amazing Gulf Coast work
- Dialogue with Methodists
- Youth/Young Adults
 - 7 new campus ministry plants
 - 28 diocese better prepared – adult baptisms, confirmations & receptions up
- Communications – Episcopal Life Online w/ 174,000 unique users in first 3 months of launch
- Small Church ministry as a model of services going to congregation/dio/prov
- More and better research, data, especially demographics
 - Trend data is not all good but is accurate for better planning
- Evangelism imperative
- Churches clear identity and mission/outreach are growing whether large or small
- PB's role
- Opportunities for Evangelism
 - Disenchanted with fundamentalist mega churches
 - Young
- First time in 200 years to rearticulate polity in response to the Communiqué
- Opportunity to debate whether we will adopt a confession through the study of the proposed Anglican Covenant.
- Great Volunteers
- Lots of dioceses/parishes are healthy

Critical issues

- declining ASA
- declining \$\$ from dioceses
- declining membership – demographic issues
- changing expectations of culture and community
- angst & concern for way forward – compassion for benefit – right, left center
- changing context for leadership development : developing and vocabulary
- seminary education: finance for students & seminaries & age; issues with traditional 3-year and educated at dio level (not M.Div)
- Identity
 - Baptism / Eucharist
 - Claim our baptismal & Eucharistic identify
- relationship with Worldwide Anglican Communion
 - danger of isolationism
 - others set our agenda
 - being asked for a confession (covenant)
 - polity
- issue of 815 staff
- wearing down of leadership
- growing need to react
- too many CCAB's
- we are so far behind with technology.....staff doesn't have resources to do their job

Keys for moving ahead:

- Eagerness for mission, but weakness in Identity and Purpose
 - critical for sustaining mission
 - evangelism balanced by compassion
- Related –
 - Learn to disagree with respect and love and to welcome all to the Lord's table and to shared leadership of the Church
- Changes?
 - 815 & GC restatement (Linda etc.
 - Leadership Development (Rebecca)
 - Evangelism and Purpose
 - Well-positioned for the future
 - Jesus Christ as source of focus of mission & unity

Interim report: The report needs to include the 2006 figures. The report should be distributed to existing and newly elected deputies, CCAB's and the Executive Council.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathryn Weathersby McCormick, *Secretary*