

Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development

MEMBERSHIP

The Rev. Richard J. Aguilar, 2003
 The Rev. Howard Anderson, 2000
 Mr. Donald Burke, 2000, *co-chair*
 Mr. Eugene T. Chrostowski, 2003
 Mrs. Jane R. Cosby, 2000
 Mr. Thomas R. Gossen, 2003
 The Rt. Rev. David Colin Jones, 2000, *secretary*
 Ms. Joon Matsumura, 2000
 Mr. Manuel G. Mesa, 2000
 The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley, Jr., 2003, *co-chair*
 Ms. Bessie Titus, 2003
 Mr. Walter Virden III, 2003
 The Rev. Barnum McCarty, *Executive Council liaison*
 Terry Parsons, *stewardship officer and resource person*

Bishop Parsley and Deputy Donald Burke have been authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to the report during the Convention.

CHARGE

Title I, Canon 1.2 (n) (9) [p. 19] as amended by A176a calls on the 12-member Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development to

- hold up before the church the responsibility of faithful stewardship of time, talent, and treasure in grateful thanksgiving for God's gifts
- recommend strategies for stewardship education throughout the church with special sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic diversity of our church
- recommend programs for long-range planning and development, insuring that other church bodies, including the Executive Council, are part of the process
- assure that there is an official, periodic gathering, interpretation, evaluation, and reporting of stewardship from throughout the church
- help coordinate all church-wide fund-raising activities

MEETINGS

The Commission met four times during the triennium: May 10-13, 1998, Dallas, Texas; November 12-14, 1998, Burlingame, California; May 14-16, 1999, Camp McDowell, Birmingham, Alabama; October 2-24, 1999, Kansas City, Missouri. An organizational meeting of a small group of the Commission was held March 20-23, 1998, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in conjunction with the Joint Interim Bodies meeting.

RESPONSE TO 1997 RESOLUTIONS

The full Commission made the following disposition of the work committed to it by action of the 72nd General Convention:

A138S *Affirmation of the title and Sharing of stewardship Stories*. The Commission continues to hold up for our church the tithe as a minimum standard for Christian giving and is collecting stewardship stories for publication and distribution at the 73rd General convention.

A141 *Cooperation of Stewardship Education Programs with the ELCA*. In light of the on-going development of *Called to Common Mission*, this is progressing slowly and will be a priority in the next triennium.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMISSION'S WORK

Introduction

The ministry of Christian Stewardship is about the joyful transformation of hearts, minds, and spirits. We are called in Christ to a life of generous giving in response to the grace of God. Such a life is an on-going journey of conversion, transformation, and challenge as we seek to be stewards of God's gifts and of the mission of the church.

We believe that the challenge before us in this new century and millennium is found in the words of God's call to St. Francis of Assisi quoted in our Presiding Bishop's institution sermon, "rebuild my church." These words have shined as a beacon for us in development which we are placing before this General Convention. God is calling us to build and rebuild the church in fresh and life-giving ways. Stewardship must be at the center of this journey.

Stewardship Defined

The theology of Christian stewardship concerns the management and offering of our whole lives in response to the grace and call of God in Jesus Christ. It is *lived theology*, a central way in which we live out our faith as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Stewardship is our *joyful response* to the magnitude of God's love. All that we are and all that we have is God's gift to us. The God we know in Christ is a God of abundance and blessing, multiplying the loaves and the fishes so that there is enough for all.

Stewardship is our *confident and thankful* knowledge that the God of abundance always gives full measure of our daily bread—enough and more to fill our needs. We can give of what we have each day and lie down to rest, knowing that there will be manna in the morning.

We are invited to respond to God's abundance by being joyful stewards of all God has given us to do the work God is calling all of us to do. Faithful stewardship involves giving of our time, talent, and treasure in thanksgiving to God for the mission and ministry of the church. It is *an invitation to joy, not merely a duty or an obligation*. Stewardship is an expression of our love affair with God in which we are privileged to give to the Beloved who has given all to us.

At the heart of it is the biblical teaching of the tithe, given to us as a minimum guide for our financial giving to God. This is not a legalistic standard. Tithing is a *transformational act of stewardship which changes our hearts*, freeing us to be generous and cheerful

givers. It empowers the church to be a celebrative community of faith and mission.

Finally, stewardship is a *bold commitment to the call of Christ to “build my church.”* All of our giving is for mission and ministry. It is through the generous stewardship of each of her members that the Body of Christ is equipped to do the work of the gospel in the world.

If we are to build the church as Christ commanded, our understanding of stewardship must move from a concept known in the mind to a truth of the heart lived out in every act of every day. The Commission’s work is dedicated to that goal, that as we share ourselves and our resources we become *disciples* and are empowered to take God’s love into a world desperately in need of God and the power of grace. The initiatives which have emerged from our work as a Commission in the 1997-2000 triennium are the lived theology which we believe we are called to teach.

The Development of Stewardship Statements

Stewardship, or the giving of our whole selves, is a response to the gospel. Members of the Commission wrote personal statements which were integrated into a statement of vision of stewardship which is our message to the church:

Stewardship Statement

WE BELIEVE...

We are the children of God, and we need to give. In every aspect of our lives, we are entrusted to be stewards of God’s creation. God invites us to give freely and to exercise joyfully our gifts through mission and ministry.

WE COMMIT OURSELVES...

To boldly claim God’s abundant provision in our lives; to offer extravagantly our time, talent, and money to do God’s work; and to practice tithing as a minimum standard of giving.

WE CHALLENGE MEMBERS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH...

To confront our fears of scarcity; to embrace a new vision of stewardship through a joyful response to God’s extravagant gifts; and to empower the mission of Christ through generous giving.

WE INVITE...

Leadership groups in dioceses and congregations to develop their own stewardship statements in order to promote response to the gospel.

Stewardship Stories

Personal stories are powerful connectors which allow us to see how the biblical story is happening around us every day. Stories of joyful giving on the part of individuals, congregations, and dioceses invite others to give and to share their stories, creating a circle of thanksgiving and celebration in the church. Those who have understood stewardship as limited to fund-raising can discover a broader, richer opportunity than they have ever known before as they hear stories from the diverse people who are their brothers and sisters in Christ. These powerful individual stories merge to become community stewardship stories as members of congregations and dioceses write statements which begin with

the words “We believe...”, “We commit...”, “We invite...” Invitations have gone out to the church to share their stories, which are being compiled for sharing at Convention and throughout the triennium. The stories will serve as inspiration and as a model for teaching a theology of stewardship in our church.

The Alleluia Fund

As we have reflected upon God’s call to our Presiding Bishop to rebuild our church, the Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development has come to believe that our church is being called to a bold new vision for mission which will engage every household in every diocese in responding to that call. This vision for mission proposes to empower each diocese to respond to God’s call to build the church by creating new venture capital for mission and ministry through an Easter initiative of joyful giving to be known as “The Alleluia Fund.”

The Alleluia Fund, birthed in the Easter season, will allow us to give in celebration of who we are and Whose we are, teaching and sharing of God’s abundance as we rebuild the church, serve children and the poor, and both plant and revitalize congregations.

The following statement from the Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development invites the church to participate in the Alleluia Fund in the coming triennium:

A Proposal for “The Alleluia Fund—Build My Church”

In response to God’s call to us through our Presiding Bishop to “rebuild my church,” the Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development proposes a new initiative in planning, giving, and spiritual transformation for the dioceses of the Episcopal Church. The planning is focused on our relationship with God and on discerning God’s plan for us. The giving is focused on how we share God’s abundance. The spiritual transformation occurs when we learn to be open, hear, and respond boldly to God’s call to mission.

Our resources are being pulled in many directions. Parish membership is dropping in some places. In many other places people are out of work. Buildings are crumbling in cities. In some areas, our church is growing and expanding. Even in places where there is growth and huge resources are available, many mission opportunities are missed because of perceived lack of resources. The world is telling us that there is a scarcity of resources to do God’s work.

We believe that is an untruth. We ask the Episcopal Church boldly to proclaim that God will never send us one unit less than 100% of all that we need to do the work God calls us to do. We propose nothing less than calling the Episcopal Church to its destiny as the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, a dynamic, salty catalyst of Christ’s love in American public life and in the world.

Responding to these imperatives, this new initiative is rooted in our belief that God has richly blessed us with abundant gifts and calls us to bolder vision and a higher commitment of mission as we begin a new century. We need to give generously and joyfully for the mission of the church.

The intent of this proposal is to empower each diocese to respond to God’s call to build the church by creating new venture capital for mission and ministry. To make this possible, we are proposing an Easter initiative for transformation and mission in support of ministries which respond to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. Christ

calls us to make disciples (Mt 28) and to love our neighbor (Mk 12:30-31). We must both build the church and serve others in need, striving to restore all persons to unity with God and with each other.

The celebration of the Easter season is frequently limited to Easter Eve and Easter Day. We believe that the joy of these two days should be extended throughout all fifty days of the Easter Season.

Our proposal calls upon the church to a spiritual transformation centered upon refocusing our attention to the Good News of Christ's gift to us. We seek to move the church to an enthusiastic and vigorous witness of God's love to all creation. As we grow in our response to God's love, our proposal will produce a tangible witness through a special offering known as "The Alleluia Fund—Build My Church."

In each diocese of our church, the Alleluia Fund would be dedicated to:

- New congregational development
- Revitalization of existing congregations
- Reaching children and youth
- Ministry with those in need

With the Alleluia Fund, we propose:

1) That each diocese of our church engage in a vision process designed to identify immediate mission opportunities that, if funded, would transform lives, deepen relationships with God and with each other, and help Christians in each diocese to carry out the Baptismal Covenant.

2) That these priorities be adopted by each of the dioceses as a covenant with God that would be fulfilled as resources become available; and

3) That each household of our church be asked to make a joyful gift for mission, in addition to ordinary annual giving, during the Great Fifty Days of Easter. For example, if a million households were to give \$100 each, one hundred million dollars would be available for mission and ministry. Some might give an additional one percent of their income. Others might give another set amount each day to empower this extraordinary mission opportunity. All will be asked to study, reflect, and pray about what God is calling each household to do.

4) That each diocese identify ways to share a portion of these funds with others beyond its borders.

Through the Alleluia Fund, we have the capacity to provide not just millions, but billions of dollars over the next ten years for God's mission. This fund could generate as much as \$1 billion in a decade for new mission opportunities in the Episcopal Church. Effective teaching and implementation of the Alleluia Fund would expand our affirmation of the tithe and encourage members of the Episcopal Church to move in that direction. It will strengthen the bonds of our relationship as Episcopalians at all levels of the church.

The Office of Stewardship of the Episcopal Church Center will produce materials and resources for the implementation of the Alleluia Fund. Centering on the Easter theme, the materials for the Alleluia Fund might ask:

- What does the world look like when Jesus is present?
- What is "Ministry with the Risen Lord"?
- What is our mission as Easter people?

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- What does our Lord's resurrection tell us about how we are to live and minister to the world?

Each diocese would develop its own structures for the implementation of the Alleluia Fund. There are many exciting possibilities for the form that this venture will take, but the goal is to respond with faith and vitality to God's call to our Presiding Bishop to "rebuild my church."

Seminary Education

If a lived theology of stewardship is to become normative to our lives as Episcopalians and Christians, it is imperative that teaching the theology and practice of stewardship become a regular part of the formation of clergy and lay leadership through seminary education. We look to our leaders as both teachers and models, helping through their words and actions to form the members of the Body of Christ. As our clergy are themselves being formed, through the process of discernment, formal theological training and continuing education, integration of a lived theology of stewardship must be encouraged. Therefore the Commission on Stewardship continues to offer resources to our eleven seminaries and to encourage the development of programs for stewardship education.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEW MILLENNIUM

During the next triennium the commission will:

1. Implement the Alleluia Fund
2. Develop a mechanism for gathering and interpreting Episcopal giving patterns.
3. Develop a theology of endowments and legacy stewardship.
4. Using the stewardship statements and stories we are gathering, continue to invite the church at all levels to engage in these processes.
5. Proclaim the theme of stewardship education throughout the ECUSA.
6. Continue the development of teaching materials and opportunities for stewardship education which appropriately reflect the diversity of this church as evidenced by its regional, cultural, ethnic constituencies, and wide range of ages.
7. Promote and track stewardship education in the seminaries and in the formation of clergy.
8. Delve more deeply into the concept of 50-50 giving in the context of the church's life and ministry in the new millennium.
9. Continue to proclaim the biblical standard of the tithe as the minimum model of giving for this church.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution A106 Affirmation of Stewardship Statement and the Tithe

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this 73rd General Con-
 2 vention of the Episcopal Church adopts the following Stewardship Statement of the
 3 Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development to be its own:

4	Stewardship Statement
5	We believe...
6	We are the children of God, and we need to give. In every aspect of our
7	lives, we are entrusted to be stewards of God's creation. God invites us to
8	give freely and to exercise joyfully our gifts through mission and ministry.
9	We commit ourselves...
10	To boldly claim God's abundant provision in our lives; to offer extrava-
11	gantely our time, talent, and money to do God's work; and to practice tithing
12	as a minimum standard of giving.
13	We challenge members of the Episcopal Church...
14	To confront our fears of scarcity; to embrace a new vision of steward-
15	ship through a joyful response to God's extravagant gifts; and to empower
16	the mission of Christ through generous giving.
17	We invite...
18	Leadership groups in dioceses and congregations to develop their own
19	stewardship statements in order to promote response to the gospel;
20	and be it further
21	<i>Resolved</i> , That we, the Deputies and Bishops of this convention, give
22	thanks to God for those who embrace tithing as a faithful individual response
23	to the grace of God; and do hereby affirm through our signatures these pro-
24	fessed beliefs and practices; and be it further
25	<i>Resolved</i> , That the Secretary be directed to collect the signatures with
26	this resolution and publish the list of signatures in the Journal.

Explanation

Our Lord is recorded as charging his followers to "...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Mt 5:16) Effective stewardship formation in the congregation depends on how the conversation about God and money is addressed. Experience has demonstrated that beginning the conversation with diocesan and congregational leadership and witness has the best opportunity to effect change at every point of contact. Similarly, the General Convention has this opportunity to witness to (a) the responsibilities of leadership and (b) its proclamation of the biblical standard of the tithe, which continues to be a primary expression of our individual thanksgiving for all God has given us.

STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Resolution A107 Stewardship Education Theme

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, *That Stewardship: Living Our*
- 2 *Covenant with God—Mayordomia, Viviendo Nuestro Pacto con Dios* be adopted
- 3 as a stewardship theme for stewardship resources prepared by the Office of Stew-
- 4 ardsHIP for the next triennium.

Explanation

It is helpful for the General Convention to endorse the theme for national stewardship education materials in order to encourage the church to use these resources.

Resolution A108 Racial, Ethnic, and Generational Stewardship Ministry

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the Office of Stew-
- 2 ardsHIP be directed to call together appropriate task groups to develop stewardship
- 3 materials for use with the following racial/ethnic/generational ministry groups:
- 4 Black Ministries, Hispanic Ministries, Asiamerican Ministries, Native American
- 5 Ministries, Children and Youth; and be it further
- 6 *Resolved*, That \$50,000 be allocated annually for this work.

Explanation

In 1994, the 71st General convention allocated funds for the development of stewardship materials designed for the Hispanic community. That process, the video and other materials which resulted are proving to be an excellent resource in the growth of Hispanic participation in the Episcopal Church. Continuing that work and expanding the model to other constituencies can have significant impact on church growth and evangelism. The \$50,000 allocation would provide \$10,000 annually for work with each constituency named in the resolution.

Resolution A109 Presiding Bishop's Capital Fund Campaign

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 73rd General Con-
- 2 vention commend to the church the current capital campaign of the Presiding
- 3 Bishop's Fund for World Relief and heartily endorse this effort to increase the
- 4 Fund's endowment for the support of administration and granting.

Explanation

The Presiding Bishop's Fund Board has initiated a capital fund drive to increase the endowment of the Fund. The endorsement of this effort will encourage the board and provide this Convention an opportunity to express its gratitude for the work and witness of the Fund.

Resolution A110 Reduce Cost of General Convention

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That as evidence of our stew-
- 2 ardsHIP of God's resources, an *ad hoc* committee be appointed to investigate
- 3 methods in which the overall cost of future General Conventions be reduced, and
- 4 that a report be made to the Executive Council in the next triennium.

Explanation

The cost of attendance as a deputy at General convention has become prohibitive for many potential deputies. Many small dioceses are burdened by the cost of sending full

deputations. It is imperative that we be good stewards of our resources.

**Resolution A036 Creation of New Fund for Ministry and Mission
“The Alleluia Fund”**

(For text of this resolution, see p.79 of the Blue Book Report of the Standing Commission on Domestic Mission and Evangelism.)

Resolution A111 Planned Giving

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That all dioceses and con-
2 gregations of the church be encouraged to develop and promote the practice of
3 Legacy Stewardship as a regular part of stewardship teaching; and be it further

4 *Resolved*, That all dioceses and congregations of the church use the rubric
5 on page 445 of the Book of Common Prayer as a basis for the teaching of Legacy
6 Stewardship. The rubric states:

7 *The Minister of the Congregation is directed to instruct the People from*
8 *time to time, about the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provision for*
9 *the well-being of their families, and of all persons to make wills, while they are*
10 *in health, arranging for the disposal of their temporal goods, not neglecting if*
11 *they are able, to leave bequests for religious and charitable uses.*

Explanation

Legacy Stewardship is a new term coming into popular use in place of the term “Planned Giving.” The latest estimates regarding the generational transfer of wealth in the United States project a range of \$41 trillion to \$136 trillion during the 55-year period, 1998 to 2052. An effective Legacy Stewardship program will encourage a joyful and generous response to the mission and ministry of church as members of the Body of Christ plan the distribution of their accumulated assets.

The rubric has been in the prayer book of the church since 1549. Today, it is estimated that 50 to 70 per cent of all Americans die without a will. by following this rubric, the church will be doing a great service for its members and their families.

Resolution A112 Seminary Stewardship Training

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the eleven accredited
2 seminaries of the Episcopal Church be requested to include the teaching of Chris-
3 tian Stewardship in their curriculum and to encourage the practice of outreach to
4 those outside the seminary community.

Explanation

The future of the church will depend on having well-trained clergy in all areas of Christian Theology. The teaching of Christian Stewardship appears to be an area where increased emphasis is needed as we seek to form faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

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Resolution A113 Seminary Financial Support

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 73rd General Con-
2 vention of the Episcopal Church affirm its commitment to the seminaries of the
3 church and encourages all congregations to share our abundance by continuing
4 or initiating a minimum contribution of 1% of their annual budget income to one
5 or more of the eleven accredited seminaries of the church.

Explanation

The cost of seminary education continues to increase. Without support from our congregations, the quality of education will suffer. In addition, seminarians will be left with excessive debt as they pursue their vocations. The convention needs to hold up 1% giving to seminaries to ensure continuing quality education.

BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR STANDING COMMISSION ON STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Expenses

	2000	2001	2002
	<u>1 meeting</u>	<u>2 meetings</u>	<u>2 meetings</u>
Housing and meals	\$ 2,500	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Teleconference/ sub committees	500	900	1,000
Travel	8,000	17,000	17,000
Consultant	700		700
Postage/office	<u>500</u>	<u>600</u>	<u>600</u>
	\$12,700	\$23,800	\$24,600

Resolution A114 Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development Budget Appropriation

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the sum of \$61,100.00 be
2 appropriated for the triennium 2000 - 2002 for the expenses of the Joint Standing
3 Commission on Stewardship and Development.

SUMMARY

The Standing Commission on Stewardship and Development submits this report to the 73rd General Convention endeavoring to hold up the opportunity of joyful response to God's love through our faithful stewardship of time, talent, and treasure, and in response to the call of Christ to "build my church."