

## **Supplement to Blue Book Report from HOD State of the Church Committee**

### **Shared Authority**

In her charge to the State of the Church Committee, the President of the House of Deputies asked the committee to “to identify, study and report on the Episcopal Church’s most significant opportunities to innovate and experiment so that we are equipped for 21st century mission and ministry in our congregations, communities, and countries.” A recurring theme and focus of our work, especially in light of the impact the pandemic has had on the church, is the importance of shared authority in TEC. The consolidation of authority is antithetical to the Episcopal ethos. Formal action is needed to reinforce shared authority and eliminate consolidated authority in TEC governance. The HOD State of the Church Committee makes the following recommendations:

- Develop guidelines to limit the number of governance roles or positions any one individual can hold simultaneously
- Strengthen the DFMS Conflict of Interest Policy to make explicit that no one who receives any form of compensation from DFMS may run for or hold office with the Church Pension Group or any entity that contracts or consults with any DFMS entity, including informal or non-financial arrangements. Likewise, anyone who receives any form of compensation from the Church Pension Group or its affiliates should be prohibited from serving in any governance capacity within DFMS, excepting those who are receiving only pension payments and/or royalties from works published by CPI.

It is critical to emphasize that concerns about conflicts of interest and the consolidation of authority are not about particular individuals, but about the offices themselves and the integrity of DFMS and CPG.

### **General Convention**

The changes made to the General Convention schedule and legislative process due to the COVID pandemic should be viewed as an opportunity to experiment with conducting the General Convention in a new way. Online resolution hearings have expanded the opportunity for people to participate in the governance of the church. The possibility of online participation in the General Convention should be further evaluated with an eye to increasing accessibility and decreasing the financial burden for dioceses and deputies. The move to a shorter legislative schedule that includes a weekend should be considered as a potential new model for the General Convention. Conducting the governance work of the church in fewer days could likewise broaden participation and reduce costs at a time when many churches and dioceses are facing financial challenges. The General Convention is first and foremost a business meeting, not a reunion for the Episcopal Church. While it is meant to represent the church, it should not be assumed that the General Convention is fully representative of the church, since not everyone has the time, ability, or interest to serve. With the capacity to move much of the legislative committee work of the General Convention online, a shorter, more efficient and less expensive in-person meeting with online options should be considered as a new governance model, especially if it allows those who cannot afford or commit to a ten to twelve day convention. The amount of work expected of deputies and legislative committee members, and the total number of resolutions, must be evaluated to make a shorter convention possible and avoid placing an undue burden on those who are elected and appointed to serve.

### **Parochial Report**

In order for the parochial report to be a tool that supports congregational and denominational vitality and sustainability, it is essential that the State of the Church Committee and Executive Council, working in collaboration with staff at the General Convention Office, continually evaluate and revise the parochial report to best serve the church.

A particular issue for the Task Force to revise the finance page to address is asking for the largest individual pledge/commitment as a percentage of total annual fund income and percent of budget.