

# COMPANIONS IN TRANSFORMATION

## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH'S WORLD MISSION IN A NEW CENTURY

### A STUDY GUIDE FOR GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND FEEDBACK TO SCWM

#### INTRODUCTION

In 2003, the Standing Commission on World Mission (SCWM) presented its vision statement, *Companions in Transformation: The Episcopal Church's World Mission in a New Century*\*, to the 74<sup>th</sup> General Convention. In Resolution A150, the General Convention called on the Church – parishes, dioceses, voluntary mission agencies, seminaries, mission networks, and Episcopal Church Center agencies – to study the vision statement and provide input to the work of the Standing Commission toward making specific program and budget proposals to the 2006 General Convention. It requested that a study group in each diocese be designated to make a critical study of the vision statement, and that a report from each diocese be forwarded to the Standing Commission on World Mission by June, 2005.<sup>1</sup>

This study guide is intended for use by various groups to elicit reflection and discussion on the vision set out in *Companions in Transformation*, and to invite responses to be forwarded to the Standing Commission on World Mission through the diocesan study group. The final section provides the specific questions for feedback to the Standing Commission. Far beyond that, the Standing Commission hopes that the discussions will open up a greater awareness that all the baptized are called to be engaged in world mission and that there are many ways to carry out that engagement.

When using this study guide, feel free to adapt and expand this guide as appropriate to the particular needs of the parish, diocese, or other group.

#### A ONE-SESSION PLAN FOR DISCUSSING *COMPANIONS IN TRANSFORMATION*

- What does *Companions* express about the mission work you are already doing?
- How does *Companions* challenge you to go beyond the mission work you are already doing?
- What invitation are you hearing in this vision statement?
- What difference could *Companions* make in the mission outreach of your parish or diocese or agency?
- How do you feel about the change that is involved in transformation?
- How would you translate what you have been discussing into action?
- What do the ideas you have been discussing mean for your community?

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\* *Companions in Transformation: The Episcopal Church's World Mission in a New Century*. (Foreword by Mano Rumlshah; Preface by Titus Presler.) New York, The Standing Commission on World Mission of the Episcopal Church, 2003. Available from: Episcopal Parish Services, P.O. Box 132, Harrisburg, PA 17105; USA; Web Site: [www.episcopalparishservices.org](http://www.episcopalparishservices.org). Toll Free Tel: 1-800-903-5544; Direct Tel: 1-717-541-8130, exts. 117 or 205; Fax: 1-717-541-8128; Email: [epsorders@morehousegroup.com](mailto:epsorders@morehousegroup.com). The basic text can be found at: [www.episcopalchurch.org/agr](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/agr).

## A MULTI-SESSION PLAN FOR DISCUSSING *COMPANIONS IN TRANSFORMATION*

### General Questions

- As you read and discuss *Companions in Mission*, jot down the themes that particularly resonate with you. In your group, discuss why.
- As you review the important points raised, consider what they mean:
  - for yourself, in your daily life and in your support to others
  - for your parish
  - for the Episcopal Church
  - for the Anglican Communion.
- How would you translate these ideas into action in your parish or agency?
- Where should the Episcopal Church focus its engagement in world mission?

### Chapter I – Theological Basis: God is on Mission in Christ

- What has been your understanding of mission? How has this chapter changed your understanding of mission?
- How do you feel about the emphasis on mission being incarnate, being in the flesh? Give examples of such mission.
- The chapter suggests that as Christians have crossed boundaries of culture and ethnicity to share Christ, they have been transformed themselves. How might your own Christian identity and vocation be transfigured in places and relationships now foreign to you? What might hold you back?

### Chapter II – An Ethos for Mission: God’s People are Companions in Mission

- Of the themes of mission in this chapter, which one best fits you? In which model do you feel most at home?
- Which theme or themes represent a growing edge for you? How would thinking and ministering in this way transform your life and the mission work of your community?
- Discuss the example of post-hurricane ministry cited on page 10 (see highlighted item in published version): Does this reflection help you understand the theme of mission as sacrament?

### Chapter III – Today’s Context for Mission: World Crisis and Mission Integrity

- What surprises did you find in this overview of the context for mission?
- Are there elements of today’s world context that you feel are missing in this chapter?
- Give some examples of what it means to you to live in a world of crisis.
- Share experiences you have had with Christians in or from the Global South.
- Discuss the example of Bible study in Taiwan on page 17 (see highlighted item in published version): What light does this shed on mission and the under-evangelized?
- Discuss the conclusions at the end of this chapter. How do you feel about these conclusions about the meaning of integrity in mission and how the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society will live out that integrity?

## Chapter IV – Modes of Mission: Incarnate Presence in a World Community

- How aware is your community of the church's involvement in world mission and the opportunities that are available? What kind of mission education would help your community become more aware?
- How do you feel about this chapter's emphasis on people being with people – through sending missionaries, hosting missionaries, and supporting pilgrimages?
- Discuss the reflections from young mission pilgrims on page 29 (see highlighted item in published version): What light do these pilgrims shed on the pilgrimage of mission?
- How does sharing money in mission relate to the incarnational emphasis on people being with people?
- How do you feel about the emphasis on mission networks such as companion dioceses, ecumenical work, the Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission (EPGM) and the Global Episcopal Mission Network (GEM), and inter-Anglican groups?

## Chapter V – Resources for World Mission: Equipping the Church for the 21st Century

- This chapter proposes major initiatives to enhance the modes of the church's world mission. What are your reactions to these initiatives? Are they too modest, too bold, or just right? Are there other possibilities that you think should be here?
- What do you think about the "Plan to Re-Deploy the Church's World Mission Funds" (section 1)?

## WHAT THE STANDING COMMISSION ON WORLD MISSION NEEDS TO KNOW FROM YOU

- How do you respond to the statement's sections on theology of mission, an ethos of mission, the context for mission, and the modes of mission (chapters I-IV)?
  - What resonates with your work and your hopes?
  - What's missing in the vision?
  - What would you change in the vision?
- How do you respond to the statement's practical proposals (chapter V)?
  - enhanced mission education
  - sending and hosting more missionaries
  - recruiting minority missionaries
  - supporting short-term pilgrimages
  - strengthening mission formation in seminaries
  - strengthening mission networks.
- How do you respond to the proposals for raising and deploying increased financial resources?
  - redeploying the funds from covenants
  - funding levels for the various practical proposals.
- What difference could *Companions in Transformation* make in the mission engagement in your parish, diocese, or agency? – Or what difference has it made?

## WINDOWS ON MISSION – A DOCUMENTARY SERIES

As you discuss world mission through *Companions in Transformation*, you might find it helpful to view stories of Episcopal missionaries at work and reflecting on their ministries on site. *Windows on Mission* is a series prepared by the Mission Personnel Office at the Episcopal Church Center. Each portrait is 15–20 minutes in length, available in VHS format for \$5 each (or, the first six in DVD format for \$15 and the entire set on two DVDs for \$30). Here is an overview of the available portraits:

- Frank Griswold encouraging the church's international missionaries as Presiding Bishop through a video address.
- Nancy and Gerry Hardison ministering through a theological college and a hospital in the Diocese of Maseno North, Anglican Church of Kenya.
- Scott and Carol Kellerman ministering with a pygmy people in the Diocese of Kinkizi, Anglican Church of Uganda.
- Caleb and Louise King ministering through a hospital in the Diocese of Shyira, The Episcopal Church of Rwanda.
- Episcopal missionaries from throughout Africa reflecting on their ministries at a retreat near Nairobi, Kenya.
- Episcopal medical missionaries from throughout the world reflecting on their ministries at a retreat near Nairobi, Kenya.
- Valeska Daley ministering with women in the Diocese of Honduras, Episcopal Church.
- Michael and Mona Dresbach ministering through a parish in the Diocese of Panama, Anglican Church of Central America.
- Randall Giles ministering through musical and liturgical work in the Diocese of Chennai (Madras), Church of South India.
- Ross Kane ministering through the New Sudan Council of Churches in the Episcopal Church of Sudan.
- Suzanne Peterson ministering through a parish in the Diocese of Grahamstown, Church of the Province of Southern Africa.
- Mano and Benita Rumalshah leading a diocese amid Islam in the Diocese of Peshawar, United Church of Pakistan.
- James and Lorine Williams ministering through a parish in the Diocese of Matlosane, Church of the Province of Southern Africa.

The DVDs and videos are available from Episcopal Parish Services, P.O. Box 1321, Harrisburg, PA 17105; USA; Web Site: [www.episcopalparishservices.org](http://www.episcopalparishservices.org). Toll Free Tel: 1-800-903-5544; Direct Tel: 1-717-541-8130, exts. 117 or 205; Fax: 1-717-541-8128; Email: [epsorders@morehousegroup.com](mailto:epsorders@morehousegroup.com).

All groups discussing *Companions in Transformation* are invited to send their responses through their diocesan study group or directly to the Standing Commission on World Mission. Responses should be sent to: Helena Mbele-Mbong, Chair, Standing Commission on World Mission, 738, rue de Rogeland, 01170 Gex, France; e-mail: [mbelembong@wanadoo.fr](mailto:mbelembong@wanadoo.fr); or to Margaret Larom, Director, Anglican and Global Relations, The Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY, 10017, e-mail: [mlarom@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:mlarom@episcopalchurch.org). In either case, please be sure to mention SCWM as the subject.

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### <sup>1</sup> Resolution A150: World Mission Vision

*Resolved*, That the 2003 General Convention call the Church to study, during the 2004–2006 triennium, the vision for world mission contained in the document, "Companions in Transformation: The Episcopal Church's World Mission in a New Century," prepared by the Standing Commission on World Mission; and be it further

*Resolved*, That a study group in each diocese be designated to make a critical study of the Vision statement, this group to include diocesan representatives of groups such as Companion Diocese Committees, the Global Mission Network, United Thank Offering, Episcopal Relief and Development and other member groups of the Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission (EPGM) and others as may be available, and that a report from each diocese be forwarded to the Standing Commission on World Mission by World Mission Sunday in January 2005; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Convention call on parishes, dioceses, voluntary mission agencies, seminaries, mission networks, and Episcopal Church Center agencies to participate in the outlined process during the triennium; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Convention request the Standing Commission on World Mission to gather and interpret responses from around the Church and make specific programmatic and budgetary proposals to the 2006 General Convention.

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