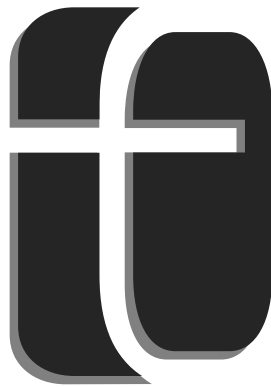


HANDBOOK FOR ECUMENISM



*office of
ecumenical
and interfaith
relations*

That they all may be one. John 17:21

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**For the bishops, diocesan ecumenical officers
and others representing the Episcopal Church
in relations with Churches of other traditions.**

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was intended to promote fresh discussions in light of the failure of church union plans in many parts of the world. The 1985 General Convention asked the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations to arrange a study of the report and prepare a response. The 1991 General Convention transmitted the Standing Commission's response to the ACC as the official response of the Episcopal Church (Blue Book, 1991, p. 76).

The other North American member churches of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches are: Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Hungarian Reformed Church in America, Lithuanian Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, Reformed Church in America, Korean Presbyterian Church in America, and Second Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Dialogue with the Presbyterian Church, USA

Following the 1999 Plenary of the Consultation on Church Union, the SCER discussed the advisability of engaging in a formal dialogue with the Presbyterian Church USA, particularly focused on the historic episcopate. The SCER agreed to propose this resolution calling for a dialogue authorized by the General Convention. The 2000 General Convention authorized the first formal bilateral dialogue in almost fifty years between the PCUSA and the Episcopal Church. In addition Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), the successor of the Consultation on Church Union, has focused directly on the question of reconciliation of ministries, beginning with its inaugural meeting in January of 2002. The Presbyterian-Episcopal dialogue met for the first time in June 2002, and discussed understandings of baptismal ministry, ordained ministry, and the how the ministry of oversight is expressed in our traditions. The dialogue has continued to meet and provide feedback to the Ministry Task Force of CUIC, and suggested a consultation on the historic episcopate, which was held in October of 2006.

Anglican - Roman Catholic

The Roman Catholic Church is composed of the Latin Rite and the Eastern Rite Churches. In the United States the Western Church is known as the Roman Catholic Church, but nine Eastern Catholic Church jurisdictions also exist here: Armenian, Byelorussian, Chaldean, Melkite, Maronite, Romanian, Russian, Ruthenian, and Ukrainian. Bishops of these Rites, both Western and Eastern, are in communion with the Bishop of Rome and are members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Relations between the Church of Rome and the Church of England, formally severed in the 16th century, have always persisted, though they were often strained almost to the breaking point, as for instance in 1896 when Pope Leo XIII in the encyclical Apostolicae Curae declared Anglican Orders to be invalid. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York replied to Apostolicae Curae in a Responsio (1897). The Malines Conversations took place between members of the Church of England and Belgian and French Roman Catholics from 1921 to 1925. Pope Pius XI in his encyclical Mortalium Animos (1928) declared unity to be possible only through the absorption of other Christians into the Roman Catholic Church, and forbade Roman Catholics to take part in ecumenical conferences. The 1930 Lambeth Conference Committee on Unity commented: "Complete Absorption' has been proposed to the exclusion of that suggested in the Conversations, as for example, in the paper read at Malines 'L'eglise Anglicane unie, non absorbee.' There are difficulties greater than perhaps were realized in the scheme proposed, but it has the great merit of attempting to recognize to some extent the autonomy which might be possible in a united Church."

A different spirit breathed from Pope Paul VI, whose address in 1970 on the canonization of the Forty English Martyrs included the following: "There will be no seeking to lessen the legitimate prestige and worthy patrimony of piety and usage proper to the Anglican Church when the Roman Catholic Church's humble 'Servant of the servants of God' is able to embrace her ever beloved sister in the one authentic Communion of the family of Christ: a communion of origin and of faith, a communion of priesthood and of rule, a communion of the saints in the freedom of love of the spirit of Jesus."

The pontificate of Pope John XXIII greatly improved the atmosphere for ecumenism. A new era in Anglican-Roman Catholic relations opened in 1960 with the courageous visit of Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher of Canterbury to Pope John. Since then the Archbishop of Canterbury has had a permanent representative in Rome, now located at the Anglican Centre in Rome, Palazzo Doria Pamphilj, Piazza del Collegio Romano 2, Int 7, 00186 Roma, Italy.

The Anglican Communion was the first to accept Pope John XXIII's invitation to send Observer-Delegates to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). The Council's dogmatic constitution De Ecclesia and its decree De Ecumenismo showed the Roman Catholic Church's new attitude to other churches, and an important declaration upholding the principle of religious liberty was also promulgated. The decree De Ecumenismo referred to the Anglican Communion as follows:

"Other divisions arose more than four centuries later in the West, stemming from the events which are usually referred to as 'The Reformation.' As a result, many Communions, national or confessional, were separated from the Roman See. Among those in which Catholic traditions and institutions in part continue to exist, the Anglican Communion occupies a special place."

In 1966 Archbishop Michael Ramsey, in his dual capacity as Primate of All England and President of the Lambeth Conference, visited Pope Paul VI. The Pope and the Archbishop signed a Common Declaration which announced their intention to "inaugurate between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion a serious dialogue which, founded on the Gospels and on the ancient common traditions, may lead to that unity in truth, for which Christ prayed. The dialogue should include not only theological matters such as Scripture, Tradition, and Liturgy, but also matters of practical difficulty felt on either side."

A joint Preparatory Commission was soon appointed to draw up a program, and the first meeting of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) took place in 1966. ARCIC produced agreed statements on Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination, and Authority in the Church, and Elucidations responding to questions about the first two statements. In 1982 ARCIC produced The Final Report, comprised these texts plus an Introduction on ecclesiological propositions and an elucidation on the third statement.

The Anglican Consultative Council asked the Provinces of the Anglican Communion to study the report and respond to two questions by 1986 in preparation for a pronouncement from the 1988 Lambeth Conference: (1) whether the agreed statements on Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination, and Authority in the Church (I and II) together with Elucidations, are consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans and (2) whether The Final Report offers a sufficient basis for taking the next concrete step towards the reconciliation of our Churches grounded in agreement in faith.

The then Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity asked Episcopal Conferences of the Roman Catholic Church to study the report and respond. The Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith prepared preliminary Observations on the report as a contribution to the dialogue.

The 1982 visit of Pope John Paul II to England and his pilgrimage on the eve of Pentecost to Canterbury Cathedral, mother church of the Anglican Communion, was an extraordinary event, including a service of the Word, renewal of baptismal vows, and commemoration of twentieth century martyrs. Afterwards the Pope and Archbishop Robert Runcie of Canterbury signed a Common Declaration setting up a second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission: "Its task will be to continue the work already begun: to examine, especially in light of our respective judgments on the The Final Report, the outstanding doctrinal differences which still separate us, with a view towards their eventual resolution; to study all that hinders the mutual recognition of the ministries of our Communions; and to recommend what practical steps will be necessary when, on the basis of our unity in faith, we are able to proceed to the restoration of full communion." ARCIC II began work in 1983 on the doctrine of justification, issuing the agreed statement on Salvation and the Church in 1987, available from Forward Movement Publications. This was commended for study and reflection by the 1988 General Convention. Another agreed statement on Church as Communion was issued in 1991, also available from Forward Movement Publications. It expanded what ARCIC I and II had already said about the Church as communion and showed the degree to which Anglicans and Roman Catholics already shared a true but imperfect communion.

In 1994, ARCIC II produced the agreed statement on Life in Christ: Morals, Communion and the Church, the first such statement from any international dialogue on moral issues. It describes a vision of the Christian life and its moral implications which is shared at root by Anglicans and Roman Catholics and shows how different emphases in areas of practical morality have arisen through the two communions living in separation, particularly contraception and remarriage after divorce where there is documented disagreement.

Returning to The Final Report, the 1979 General Convention had affirmed the two statements on Eucharistic Doctrine and Ministry and Ordination as "a statement of the faith of this Church in the matters concerned...a basis upon which to proceed in furthering the growth towards unity of the Episcopal Church and the Roman Catholic Church." The 1982 General Convention asked dioceses and seminaries to study and respond to the statement on Authority in the Church, and many did. The SCER gave the 1988 General Convention its evaluation of the The Final Report (Bulletin 71), including both affirmations and further questions for ARCIC II. The Convention voted that "the agreed statement on 'Authority in the Church (I and II)' of the Final Report of ARCIC represents a theological model of convergence towards which both of our Churches may grow and, in that sense, is sufficiently consonant in substance with the faith of this Church to justify further

conversations and to offer a basis for taking further steps towards the reconciliation of our Churches grounded in agreement of faith."

Synodical responses to the The Final Report from the Provinces of the Anglican Communion were collated and brought to a meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council and then to the 1988 Lambeth Conference (see The Emmaus Report, 1987) so that the bishops might "discern and pronounce a consensus". It was of course understood that any canonically changed relationship consequent upon sufficient agreement in faith would rest with the synodical authority of each Province. The pronouncement in the form of a resolution follows:

This Conference:

1. Recognizes the Agreed Statements of ARCIC I on *Eucharistic Doctrine, Ministry and Ordination*, and their *Elucidations*, as consonant in substance with the faith of Anglicans and believes that this agreement offers a sufficient basis for taking the next step towards the reconciliation of our Churches grounded in agreement in faith.
2. Welcomes the assurance that, within an understanding of the Church as communion, ARCIC II is to explore further the particular issues of the reconciliation of ministries; the ordination of women; moral questions; and continuing questions of authority, including the relation of Scripture to the Church's developing Tradition and the role of the laity in decision-making within the Church.
3. Welcomes *Authority in the Church (I and II)* together with the *Elucidation*, as a firm basis for the direction and agenda of the continuing dialogue on authority and wishes to encourage ARCIC II to continue to explore the basis in Scripture and Tradition of the concept of a universal primacy, in conjunction with collegiality, as an instrument of unity, the character of such a primacy in practice, and to draw upon the experience of other Christian Churches in exercising primacy, collegiality and conciliarity....

The official response of the Vatican came in 1991 from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. It warmly welcomed The Final Report, saying that it "constitutes a significant milestone not only in relations between the Catholic Church and the Anglican Commission but in the ecumenical movement as a whole". It judges, however, "that it is not yet possible to state that substantial agreement has been reached on all the questions studied by the commission. There still remain between Anglicans and Catholics important differences regarding essential matters of Catholic Doctrine." A long explanatory note gives a detailed summary of the areas where difficulties or ambiguities are perceived, and hope is expressed that "this reply will contribute to the continual dialogue".

The Anglican reaction to the Vatican response was disappointment. A statement from the Archbishop of Canterbury noted that "the question to our two communions appears to have been understood as asking: Is the Final Report identical with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church? The argument of the response suggests that a difference in methodology may have led to this approach. If either communion requires that the other conform to its own theological formulations, further progress will be hazardous".

Recently ARCIC II responded to the Vatican request for clarification about two parts of The Final Report in Clarifications on Eucharist and Ministry, 1994, available from Church House Publishing, London. A statement from Cardinal Cassidy printed with the clarifications says they have "indeed thrown new light on the question concerning Eucharist and Ministry," that the agreements reached on these subjects are "greatly strengthened and no further study would seem to be required at this stage." The Cardinal urged ARCIC II to move on to the third part of The Final Report on Authority in the Church. In 1999 ARCIC issued The Gift of Authority, which focused on the question of the interplay between lay and episcopal authority in the church, and between collegial and primatial exercising of episcopal authority. The 2003 General Convention approved The Episcopal Church's formal response to The Gift of Authority. In 2005, the final statement from the current round of ARCIC dialogues was issued, Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ. A third round of ARCIC dialogue has been announced, focusing on the relationship between the local church and universal church.

In May of 2000 a large number of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops, including Presiding Bishop Griswold, Archbishop Carey, and Cardinal Edward Cassidy, met in Mississauga, Canada, to review over thirty years of dialogue between the two churches. The meeting produced a common statement, Communion in Mission, and an action plan to oversee the implementation of the initiatives outlined. The Mississauga Conference has been a major breakthrough in Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations, breathing new life and energy into the dialogue. A continuing working group, the

International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, continued to meet following the 2000 Mississauga Conference. In 2007 a report summarizing their work was issued, Growing Together in Mission and Unity, summarizing forty years of dialogue and exploring ways Anglicans and Roman Catholic might engage in joint mission work.

In the USA, the Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation began in 1965 to explore a variety of subjects affecting relationships between the two communions. The most prominent ARC-USA report was the "Agreed Statement on the Purpose of the Church" (Bulletin 38). This statement was affirmed by the 1979 General Convention "as a description of the mandate this Church has received to proclaim the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Among other reports, ARC-USA produced "Doctrinal Agreement and Christian Unity" (1972), a "Statement on the Ordination of Women" (1975), "Images of God: Reflections on Christian Anthropology (1983), and "Anglican Orders: A Report on the Evolving Context of their Evaluation in the Roman Catholic Church" (Bulletin 100). Currently ARC-USA is working on a congregational-based study guide which will review the agreements between the two churches and look at possible ways Anglicans and Roman Catholics might work together on the local level.

The international and USA dialogues are available in Called to Full Unity: Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations, 1966-1983 (Publishing Service, U.S. Catholic Conference, 3211 Fourth St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017).

A joint Standing Committee of Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (EDEO) and the Roman Catholic National Association of Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (NADEO) has produced reports on The Lived Experience: A Survey of U.S. ARC Covenants (1979), Tale of Three Cities: Ogden, Louisville, Tidewater: A Study of U.S. ARC Covenants (1980), ARC Marriages: A Study of U.S. Couples Living Episcopal-Roman Catholic Marriages (1981), Pastoral Care for ARC Couples: Models for Ministry to Engaged and Married Couples (1982), ARC Baptisms: Pastoral Perspective (1983), Progress Report (1984), and ARC Soundings: A U.S. Response to ARCIC I, Robert S. Ervin and Ernest R. Falardeau, Editors (1990). All are available through EDEO or the Ecumenical Office. Their most recent publication, Receiving the Vision: The Anglican - Roman Catholic Reality Today (The Liturgical Press, 1995), assesses the progress we have made and the difficulties still before us.

Consultation on Church Union

History:

Conversations between the Episcopal Church and the Methodist Church were suspended in favor of wider discussions after Eugene Carson Blake, then the Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church, proposed in 1960 that the Episcopal Church join the United Presbyterian Church to invite the Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ to explore the establishment of a united church which would be "truly Catholic, truly Evangelical and truly Reformed." The 1961 General Convention accepted the proposal as did the Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ. Over the years the number of participating churches increased so that today it comprises two churches of the Reformed tradition [Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ], four Methodist churches [African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, United Methodist], the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the International Council of Community Churches. In 2006 the Moravian Church, Northern Province, formally joined the successor to COCU, Churches Uniting in Christ.

In its first decade agreement was reached on Principles of Church Union (1966), including some notable theological work on Tradition and traditions. This was the basis of A Plan of Union (1970), which included a restatement of the theological premises and the outline of a constitution for a Church of Christ Uniting. This proposal proved to be unacceptable to all the churches.

A new Commission on the Revision of the Theological Basis appointed in 1973 first produced "Toward the Mutual Recognition of Members: An Affirmation" recognizing the baptisms of other churches. This was adopted by all the churches. The 1976 General Convention endorsed it in principle, though it added two qualifying footnotes regarding the differing ecclesial traditions which shape the life of members of particular communions (Bulletin 17 and 20). COCU also issued its Plan of Union, which called for full, organic merger of the churches.

In 1976 the Commission produced the first six chapters of a revision of theological portions of the Plan of Union, and in 1980 a seventh chapter on the Ministry was added, all of which the Consultation commended to the churches for study and response. The 1979 General Convention asked the dioceses, selected parishes and seminaries to study the seven chapters of this revised Plan, now entitled In Quest of a Church of Christ Uniting. The responses, collected by the Standing

Commission and transmitted to the Consultation (Bulletin 52), could be summarized as "much good, but some serious problems." The 1982 General Convention resolved to "express its gratitude for the 'emerging theological consensus'...and direct the Episcopal delegation to the Consultation to press for re-examination of those portions of the document noted as matters of concern," specified as: authority of the creeds, sacramental acts other than Baptism and Eucharist, understanding of Confirmation, collegiality of the Presbyterate and Episcopate, divine action in ordination, the meaning of lay and diaconal sharing in ordination rites, and the theology of the Church.

In 1984 the Consultation adopted a revised text titled The COCU Consensus: In Quest of a Church of Christ Uniting, available from Forward Movement Publications, and asked "the participating churches, by formal action, to recognize in it: "an expression, in the matters with which it deals, of the Apostolic faith, order, worship, and witness of the church...and a sufficient theological basis for the covenanting acts and uniting process proposed at this time by the Consultation."

The 1985 General Convention directed the Standing Commission to initiate a study in all dioceses and seminaries of The COCU Consensus so that the 1988 General Convention might determine whether it provided "a sufficient theological basis in those matters with which it is concerned, for continuing in the process leading towards covenanting...."

The Standing Commission organized studies in dioceses and seminaries, conducted a survey of bishops and deputies to General Convention, and created a theology committee made up of persons with experience in all dialogues in which this Church participates to listen to responses and evaluate the document. The report of the Theology Committee concluded that The COCU Consensus was not a fully satisfactory basis for entering into a relationship of such magnitude. Another group was appointed to prepare a report to the 1988 General Convention, summarizing the affirmations and reservations. The eight reservations were specified as uncertainty about the function of the COCU document, the fact that COCU is tied too closely to our national heritage and expectations, it is unclear that the aim is to achieve a communion of communions based on mutual recognition of each other as churches rather than on the basis of mutual acceptance of a document, the understanding of salvation as articulated is insufficient, no attempt is made to state the apostolic faith, provision for liturgical norms is lacking, difficulties remain in the ministry and ordination sections, and it is unclear how traditions which express episcopacy in the form of an historic episcopal succession are to be combined with those which intend a succession in the apostolic faith but lack formal episcopal succession.

The 1988 General Convention received the report of the Standing Commission on The COCU Consensus and expressed its "deep gratitude" for the extensive contribution of the Consultation over twenty-five years and for its articulation of "significant ecumenical convergences". The Convention voted to recognize The COCU Consensus as: (1) "an expression...of the Apostolic faith, order, worship, and witness of the Church," (2) "an anticipation of the Church Uniting...", but (3) "not yet 'a sufficient theological basis for the covenanting acts....'" The Convention voted with respect to question (3) to defer final judgment and asked the SCER "to initiate and facilitate a study of the revised covenanting proposal, in order to make a recommendation to the 70th General Convention concerning both The COCU Consensus and the new proposal for covenanting". The Convention called attention to the eight reservations in the report of the SCER, asked the Consultation for elucidations on these points, authorized this Church "to continue its participation in the Consultation" and authorized the Standing Commission "to continue to join with partner churches in the Consultation on Church Union.... in exploring fresh approaches".

Later in 1988 the Consultation approved a revised text, Churches in Covenant Communion: the Church of Christ Uniting, available from Forward Movement Publications, consisting of the covenanting proposals and liturgies for inaugurating covenanting. The proposal was sent to the churches with the request that they approve the document "as the definitive agreement for joining with other participating churches in covenant communion". The Episcopal delegation at this meeting of the Consultation addressed the following resolution to the SCER: "The delegation...endorses the resolution to transmit...the document...we welcome the proposal as a bold and challenging step towards the vision of a Communion of Communions as set forth in the 1979 statement on The Nature of the Unity We Seek, but with the proviso that certain elements proposed therein (including but not limited to its suggested method for sharing the historic episcopate) be reviewed both within the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion during the next few years, in order to facilitate the proposal's ultimate consideration by the General Convention."

The report of the Standing Commission to the 1991 General Convention noted that the 1988 General Convention had used the words "not yet" to indicate that the Episcopal Church was not clear about the covenanting acts yet to be proposed and that there were eight reservations about the theology set forth in the text of The COCU Consensus. The report related that a joint committee composed of members of the Standing Commission and the COCU Executive Committee had set about preparing a series of elucidations intended to be clarifying statements interpreting The COCU

Consensus in relation to the eight reservations. However, the Standing Commission as a whole could not endorse the Elucidations as an authorized interpretation of the text. The report asked for adequate time for a thorough study of Churches in Covenant Communion, but stated that "before real unity can be achieved, there must be growth in our knowledge and understanding of each other and further theological dialogue." The full 1991 General Convention resolution may be found in Appendix D.

The study of Churches in Covenant Communion took the form of a survey instrument and packet of COCU materials sent to all dioceses, which were urged to study this text before responding. Fifty-three dioceses responded. The Standing Commission appointed a theological committee to listen to the responses and evaluate Churches in Covenant Communion, including a comparison of its proposals on the ordained ministry with those of the newly published Concordat of Agreement from the Lutheran-Episcopal Dialogue, as recommended by the House of Bishops Ecumenical Committee. In a separate but related event, the 1993 Delray Consultation, sponsored by the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and including Methodist, Reformed and Disciples participants, compared treatment of the ordained ministry in Concordat of Agreement, Churches in Covenant Communion, A Common Calling, and Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. The report is available from the ELCA Ecumenical Relations Office.

The Standing Commission's report to the 1994 General Convention recommended that the Episcopal Church "not enter a relationship of covenant communion as proposed in Churches in Covenant Communion".

Churches Uniting in Christ

In January 1999, COCU held its first plenary meeting in ten years, recommending that the churches enter into a new relationship to be called **Churches Uniting in Christ**, to be inaugurated and celebrated during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in the year 2002. The plenary identified nine marks of Churches Uniting in Christ and called for dialogue, with the goal of full reconciliation of ministry by 2007. The plenary also approved "A Call to Christian Commitment and Action to Combat Racism."

While supporting enthusiastically the anti-racism initiative, the Episcopal delegation made it clear that the Episcopal Church cannot enter into a relationship that includes the mutual recognition of ordained ministry, unless it has assurance that future reconciliation will include bishops in historic succession and a common and fully interchangeable three-fold ministry which the Presbyterian Church has rejected.

Following the Plenary session, a theological roundtable was convened to seek to address the problems of the Plenary document. As a result of their discussions, the Executive Committee of COCU passed the "Recommendation to the Churches for a New Relationship, Churches Uniting in Christ" (see Appendix D).

At its meeting in Chicago in October 1999, the SCER discussed the revised proposal from the COCU Executive committee and voted affirmatively to support the next steps in the work of COCU/CUIC. The resolution passed by the 2000 General Convention may be found in Appendix D.

Episcopal - Reformed Episcopal

The 1988 General Convention directed the Standing Commission to explore the possibilities of dialogue with representatives of the Reformed Episcopal Church, a church originating in controversies within the Episcopal Church in the 19th century. An informal dialogue group was formed, drawn from the Philadelphia-Baltimore area. After meeting for several years to discuss such matters as authority, Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, and ordained ministry, the group recommended a formal dialogue be established. The General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church approved, and the 1994 General Convention approved "a dialogue with the Reformed Episcopal Church, the goals of which will include the basis for a mutual recognition of our ordained ministries". However, the Reformed Episcopal Church later decided not to enter into formal dialogue with the Episcopal Church. In 2001 the EIR Office initiated contact with the Reformed Episcopal Church with the goal of re-establishing the dialogue. After initial discussions, a trilateral dialogue involving The Episcopal Church, the Reformed Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Province in America (APA) met from 2003-2004. In the 2004 further talks were put on hold.

Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue

In 1997 the General Convention established an official dialogue with the Moravian Church in America. A steering committee met in 1999, with a Moravian counterpart group, and prepared a report for SCER suggesting goals,