

Appendix A

Historical Summary of Anglican and Methodist Dialogue

In Advent 1999 a group of Methodists and Anglicans, mostly in the United States, agreed to pray together for Anglican-Methodist unity through the liturgical year that began in Advent 1999. Their prayers reflect the deep longing of many Anglicans and Methodists that our churches somehow find a way to stronger, more visible unity in Christ. Their prayers could be summarized in the petition that serves as the title of this study guide: “Make us one.”

The Episcopal-United Methodist dialogue has set full communion as the goal for our two churches. In this case, full communion is understood as a relationship between two distinct churches or communions in which each maintains its own autonomy while recognizing the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith. In such a relationship, communicant members of each church would be able freely to communicate at the altar of the other, and ordained ministers may officiate sacramentally in either church. Specifically, in our context, we understand this to include transferability of members; mutual recognition and interchangeability of ministries; freedom to use each other’s liturgies; freedom to participate in each other’s ordinations and installations of clergy, including bishops; and structures for consultation to express, strengthen, and enable our common life, witness, and service, to the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

Methodists and Episcopalians have much in common from our roots in the Church of England and in how our traditions went through a process of adaptation to the American colonies. This is particularly the case in the post-Revolutionary period, which was an extraordinarily formative period for both of our traditions. Despite many commonalities, Methodists and Episcopalians have rarely been in one-on-one, bilateral dialogue with one another in the United States. Initial attempts in the 1930s were postponed from the Methodist side to focus on the reunion of the Methodist Episcopal Church’s Northern and Southern branches, which was accomplished in 1939. Following the Second World War, and building on Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher’s call in his famous Cambridge Sermon for renewed dialogue between Anglicans and other

churches, the Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church engaged in dialogue from 1948-1961. These conversations, however, were ended in favor of both churches’ participation in the multi-church Consultation on Church Union. In 1968 the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to form the United Methodist Church. From 1964-2002, the Methodist and, later, The United Methodist Church, dialogued with the Episcopal Church within the context of the Consultation on Church Union.

Meanwhile, Anglicans and Methodists in Great Britain and Ireland engaged in several different rounds of bilateral dialogue for the last fifty years. An initial proposal for reunion in England was approved by the Methodist Conference in 1972 but failed to achieve the necessary 75% threshold in the General Synod of the Church of England. In 1982, a Covenanting for Unity proposal which included Methodist, Moravians and the Reformed churches in Great Britain again failed to receive the required 75% in General Synod. In 1994, the Methodist Church approached the Church of England to engage in preliminary talks. These talks eventually lead to both churches embarking on formal conversations in 1996, setting as their goal the visible unity of the church. These conversations have continued, and issued the seminal Anglican-Methodist Covenant in 2001. In 2002, this Covenant was signed by the British Methodist Church and the Church of England, committing the churches to a ten-year process of covenant relationship marked by increasing cooperation in mission, witness, and education.

Similar advances have been made on the international level. Responding to an initiative from the 1988 Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Communion and the World Methodist Council engaged in a communion-wide dialogue from 1993-1996. It issued its final report, *Sharing the Apostolic Communion*, which detailed the substantial theological convergence reached between Anglicans and Methodists. On the basis of such convergence, the 1998 Lambeth Conference encouraged local provinces of the Communion to engage in dialogues with Methodist Churches (Resolution IV.17, 1998 Lambeth Conference).

Building on the momentum from the International dialogue and the Anglican-Methodist Conversations in England, and from an important and very productive local Episcopal-United Methodist dialogue in North Carolina, The United Methodist Church, authorized by its 2000 General Conference, and the Episcopal Church, authorized by the 2000 General Convention, met for its first bilateral dialogue in 2002. The period from 2002-2006 marked the initial stage of the dialogue, and has focused on two goals. The first was an examination of one another's polities, ecclesiologies, and shared history. Papers by Dr. R. Bruce Mullin, the Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner, and the Rev. Dr. Russell Richey formally addressed these issues, supplemented by presentations provided by the Rev. Betty Gamble and Dr. Thomas Ferguson. The dialogue also sought to identify convergence on matters of core doctrine for both churches. Meetings in Minneapolis and New York City addressed these questions. The Minneapolis dialogue meeting in August of 2003 featured papers by Dr. Marion Grau, the Very Rev. Bill Petersen, and the Rev. Dr. Ted Campbell, which attempted to describe the doctrinal ethos and standards of Anglicans and Methodists. The Dallas meeting of January 2004 focused on this question, with papers presented by the Rev. Canon J. Robert Wright and Bishop William Oden on the historic episcopate, and by the Very Rev. Titus Presler and Dr. Billy Abraham on mission. The September 2004 dialogue meeting in New York City focused more specifically on two very important United Methodist theological statements, *By Water and the Spirit*, about Baptism, and *This Holy Mystery*, about the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. The Rev. Dr. Gayle Fenton, who served on the study and drafting committees for these documents, presented them from The United Methodist Church, and the Rev. Dr. Ruth Meyers and the Rt. Rev. Neil Alexander provided responses from the Episcopal Church.

While focusing on matters of core doctrine, the two churches also began to discuss the one issue upon which convergence was unlikely to be reached during the initial phase of dialogue: that of the ordained ministry, in particular the historic episcopate. The two churches chose to begin discussion on the ordained ministry by looking at how both churches have maintained faithfulness to the apostolic faith through mission and through the episcopate.

The two churches have also sought practical ways to find areas of cooperation in witness and mission. Fifteen bishops from each church met in Chicago, Illinois, in 2005 to discuss how our two churches face similar challenges. It is hoped that this initial consultation may lead to future joint meeting of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church and the Council of Bishops of The

United Methodist Church. The January 2006 meeting of the dialogue met with members of the local North Carolina United Methodist-Episcopal dialogue (which has been meeting since 1992) to share the learnings of that productive dialogue. Further, the September 2006 meeting has invited leadership and members from a joint Methodist-Episcopal congregation to attend in order to see how joint mission can happen on a local level. A statement summarizing the historical and theological work of the dialogue, *Make Us One*, was published in 2007. Many of the resource documents in these appendices are drawn from *Make Us One*.

After four years of dialogue, and with nearly forty years of discussion in the Consultation on Church Union, The United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church feel that they can endorse without hesitation that both churches have maintained the apostolic faith and are members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. On the basis of this substantial theological agreement, the Episcopal Church is submitting a resolution authorizing Interim Eucharistic Sharing with The United Methodist Church to its 2006 General Convention. The United Methodist Council of Bishops, which has the authority to authorize Eucharistic sharing, has already passed a similar resolution. With the inauguration of Interim Eucharistic Sharing, it is hoped that this will begin to bring parishes together in joint worship, mission, witness, and study. In Interim Eucharistic Sharing, the two churches recognize one another as members of the only, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church, and authorize joint celebrations of the Eucharist as a way to live into a deeper relationship for the sake of mission and witness. Having reached agreement in matters of essential doctrine, the second round of dialogue between The United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church, commencing in 2006, will focus on the remaining matter upon which the two churches have been unable to reach complete agreement: that of the historic episcopate, a fully interchangeable ordained ministry, and commonly agreed upon Eucharistic elements.

We give thanks to God, whose Spirit has moved through our conversations and brought us thus far in our discussions. With thanksgiving we offer this study guide to the bishops, clergy, and deputies of the General Convention to assist in their deliberations at the 2006 General Convention. We also commend this study guide to the clergy and congregations of both our churches to deepen the relationship between our two churches and to foster better understanding for the sake of mission in local communities.

As we look forward to the continued work of this dialogue, we give thanks for the progress made and ask for God's guidance in addressing matters which need further

discussion. As we do we are reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul and take heart: "Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or

imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Members of the Dialogue

The Rt. Rev. Franklin Brookhart, Co-Chair

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Rt. Rev. Philip Duncan 2007-
The Very Rev. David Bird, 2002-
The Rev. Lois Boxill, 2002- 2006
The Rev. Theodora Brooks, 2002-
Ms. Jan Farmer, 2004-
The Rt. Rev. John Lipscomb, 2002-2003
Deacon Sunny Lopez, 2004-2006
Dr. Bruce Mullin, 2002-
Dr. Patricia Page, 2002-
Dr. Ephraim Radner, 2002-2003
Rev. Dr. Paula Barker, 2007-
Dr. Thomas Ferguson, Staff

Bishop William B. Oden, Co-Chair

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, 2007-
The Rev. Dr. Ted A. Campbell, 2006-
The Rev. Trey Hall, 2002-2006
The Rev. Erica R. Jenkins, 2002-
The Rev. Dr. Diedra Kriewald, 2002-
The Rev. Dr. Russell E. Richey, 2002-
The Rev. Jeannie Treviño-Teddlie, 2002-
The Rev. Elizabeth Gamble, Staff, 2002-2005
The Rev. Dr. Douglas Mills, Staff