













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,