

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**Moravian-Episcopal Steering Committee Report
to the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations
meeting in October, 1999**

The Steering Committee met in Winston-Salem at the Conference Center of the Southern Province, Provincial Elders' Conference of the Moravian Church, on 19 - 20 July, 1999. The meeting began with a lunch hosted by the Moravians. The meeting was chaired by the Episcopal Steering Committee Chair but for the first two hours of the meeting we were joined by a group of Moravian leaders. The meeting began with prayers.

Episcopalians present were: The Rev. Canon David L. Veal, our chair, the Rev. Bob Crewdson, retired of Western North Carolina, Dr. Alda Morgan of CDSP, and Midge Roof, our staff support person.

Representing the Moravians were: The Rev. Robert E. Sawyer, President of the Southern Provincial Elders' Conference, Mr. Bob Hunter, Assistant to the President of the Southern P.E.C., the Rev. Harold E. Atkins, a local presbyter, and Ms. Mallie Graham, a prominent lay leader.

The goals of the Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue were discussed. All were agreed that full communion, including the exchange of ministries, was the goal. The resolution passed by the Episcopal General Convention, 1998, was quoted as a sufficient statement of the goals of this dialogue: "...to reaffirm those things we hold in common, to explore the possibilities of full communion, mutual recognition of ministries, and shared mission and evangelism."

Possible problem areas were identified. The origin and nature of the episcopate in each church needs to be examined for compatibility or complementarity. No conflict is anticipated in the areas of dogmatic and sacramental theology. However, there may be some questions regarding liturgical practice (reference Lambeth 1888, Resolution 11,c). For these reasons we need to have on the dialogue, or readily available to it, some scholars with professional expertise in the areas of ecclesiology and liturgics.

The recent conversations between the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and the resultant "Fetter Lane Common Statement" were discussed. It was agreed that, although the published report, *Anglican-Moravian Conversations*, contains some valuable information and insights, it would be a mistake to model our dialogue after that one. The ecclesiastical environment and the structures of our two churches in America are significantly different from what pertains in Britain and we need not be bound by their conclusions.

Canon Veal suggested that the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral provides an adequate template for the use of the Episcopal dialogue team in determining the essential compatibility of our traditions. In fact, the outline of the Quadrilateral might serve as an outline for the dialogues. Of course, the Moravians would want to add some additions and refinements.

Practical considerations were discussed. Demographics and financial resources will cause some limits and raise some problems.

Whereas Episcopal Church membership is spread rather evenly in populations across America, Moravians are concentrated in Pennsylvania and North Carolina. The Northern Province of the Moravian Church in America includes Canada, but the Anglican Church in Canada is autocephalous. Fortunately, most Moravians and Episcopalians in the United States and Canada tend to "move in the same circles" and "speak the same language," making parish-to-parish relations a fairly easy possibility. At the same time, and even more important, both churches readily cross ethnic, class, and racial lines. Both churches have essential international ties, worldwide relations that we will want to honor.

The Moravian dialogue team will be comprised of five persons, all from the Southern Province which is headquartered in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. However, the team will represent and negotiate on behalf of both the Northern and Southern Provinces. This is possible because of the close unity and cooperation of the two North American provinces. The Episcopal Church does not have a like relationship with the Anglican Church in Canada and it will be necessary for us to be in contact with our Canadian counterpart in the course of these dialogues, since Canadian Moravian/Anglican relations will inevitably be effected. Midge Roof agreed that our Ecumenical & Interfaith Officers would contact their counterparts in the Canadian Church (Alyson Barnett-Cowan, et al) and work this matter out with them.

Our original intention was to form a trilogue of Moravians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians. However, bilateral negotiations have outrun us. It was decided that the inclusion or exclusion of Lutheran participants in the Moravian-Episcopal dialogue would be governed by the outcome of the ecumenical proposals that will come before the 1999 Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA. If the "Call to Common Mission" passes, we will want to invite the ELCA to send a representative to participate in the Moravian-Episcopal dialogue.

There was a discussion of the desirability of local, grassroots, parish-to-parish interaction. Finding ways of sharing our rich liturgical and musical traditions with each other was suggested as a goal. The theological, devotional, and seasonal practices of the Moravians might prove interesting and stimulating to Episcopalians. They appear to be quite different but remarkably compatible to our practices. Social ministries are a vital part of the life of each church and sharing them may provide a significant venue for getting to know one another.

Resources for the study of the Moravian Church were discussed. (A preliminary bibliography, prepared by David Veal, is attached to this report. All the books on this list are available in libraries and for purchase, but they are not necessarily in print.)

A survey of persons most suitable to represent the Episcopal Church on this dialogue consumed much of our time. We prepared a list of such persons, with one or two alternates for each. Afterwards, we contacted these persons and ended up with the following recommendations:

BISHOP The Right Reverend J. Gary Gloster, D.Min.
Post Office Box 17025
Raleigh, NC 27619-7025

LAY Ms. Elizabeth Mellen, Graymoor Institute
475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 1960
New York, NY 10115-1999

CLERGY The Rev. Thomas N. Rightmyer, D.Min.
210 Selkirk Place
Durham, NC 27707

The Rev. Dr. Marion J. Hatchett, Th.D.
92 Carpenter Circle
Sewanee, TN 37375

The Rev. Jane B. Teter
333 Wyandotte
Bethlehem, PA 18016

All of these persons have been contacted and each is willing to serve should he be appointed to the dialogue by the Presiding Bishop.

Lubbock, Texas
29 July 1999
Mary & Martha of Bethany

The Rev. Canon David L. Veal, D.Min.
*Chair, Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue
Steering Committee*