

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject: FW: Presbyterian CER

COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL RELATIONS
OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
March 16-18, 2000
Presbyterian Center, Louisville, KY

SUMMARY OF AGENDA ITEMS AND ACTIONS TAKEN

1. Completed and affirmed an "Ecumenical Vision Statement" (attached at end) to be presented for approval to the General Assembly in Long Beach this summer.
2. Reported on on-going dialogues:
 - Roman Catholic Church Conference of Bishops
 - Korean Presbyterian Church in America
 - Oriental Orthodox Churches
 - Greek Orthodox Church
 - Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (informal dialogue)
 - CuiC (COCU). There was some discussion about the fact that the original nine "marks" of the church that came from the St. Louis plenary were sent out to the presbyteries for approval, not the 8 marks formulated by the COCU Executive Committee. It was not felt this would be a problem, however; if the presbyteries affirmed the nine marks, it could be presumed they were affirming the 8.
3. Reported on PCUSA contribution (totaling \$500,000.00) for the recapitalization of the NCC. Certain conditions were attached, including a CER comprehensive review every three years.
4. Listed items to report, or items for action for the General Assembly this summer (June 24-July 1 in Long Beach):
 - vision statement;
 - request to begin dialogue with the Moravian Church;
 - request to begin dialogue with the Episcopal Church;

- reminder of COCU/CuiC commitment to combat racism;
 - reaction to Roman Catholic Confession of Sin;
 - reaction to Lutheran/Roman Catholic joint declaration on justification (expressing appreciation and requesting development of a process of study);
 - reaction to several overtures (memorials) from presbyteries.
5. Discussed the proposed bilateral dialogue with the Episcopal Church. Midge Roof's one change in language was accepted. There is great enthusiasm. Per Midge Roof's suggestion, the committee began to think in terms of a 5-member team, and recommended that the Ecumenical Staff Team prepare a list of 15 people who would be good choices for this team. Five people will be chosen from this list at the October CER meeting. The following criteria were listed (the following is a direct quote):
We seek persons who:
- are able to articulate the values involved;
 - understand the historic episcopate;
 - have the ability to negotiate;
 - have the ability to think outside preconceived categories;
 - have a sufficient respect for our own church and can work with the political dynamics there;
 - are familiar with the global discussion on the historic episcopate;
 - have some durability and stamina;
 - (some of whom) are seminary faculty who understand(s) history and polity;
 - (some of whom) are elders;
 - (at least one who is) from this committee.
6. Agreed to send Harriet Nelson as the Presbyterian representative to General Convention.
7. Appointed a committee to design a process to review PCUSA's relationship with the NCC, the WCC and WARC every three years.
8. Reviewed "Nature and Purpose of the Church" (from WCC) and raised items to be included in PCUSA's response.
9. Created a committee to create a manual of procedures and terms for the CER.

ECUMENICAL VISION STATEMENT

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Together with Christians in every time and place, Presbyterians confess belief in one holy catholic and apostolic church. The Nicene Creed's marks of the church are not accomplishments of human performance or objects of human striving, as if the church depends on our efforts. The unity of the church is a gift of its Lord. The source and the shape of the gift are proclaimed in Scripture: "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

By God's grace, the holy catholic and apostolic church is one. And yet the one church is divided, fragmented into distinct traditions, communions, and denominations that live in various degrees of estrangement from one another. In turn, each part of the church embodies tensions in its own life that threaten to divide the one church yet again. These divisions do not eradicate the church's unity, but they obscure it, impairing common witness and weakening common mission.

The one church is not a theological abstraction; the divided church is not a sociological necessity. The unity of the church is both God's real gift and God's effective calling. Thus, the one church of Jesus Christ, established by God in the power of the Holy Spirit, is called to break down dividing walls of hostility that separate churches from one another and to build up the fullness of communion that binds churches together in common faith and witness.

As an expression of the one holy catholic and apostolic church, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has never been able to live in comfortable detachment from other churches. Instead we search for diverse patterns of the visible unity of Christ's church, seeking concord in essential things: faith, sacraments, mission and ministry. Such forms of communion are both signs of the church's unity and means by which the church's unity is achieved.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seeks patterns of visible unity in a variety of ways. We enter councils of churches such as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the National Council of Churches, pursuing oneness in faith, order, and mission. We establish relationships of full communion with other churches such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ, embodying relationships of mutual responsibility and mutual accountability. We explore possibilities for living out common faith and witness in covenant communion within communities of churches such as Churches Uniting in Christ. We participate in mission globally with ecumenical church partners, and in mission nationally with regional councils, local associations, and neighboring congregations. We engage in bilateral and multilateral dialogues with other churches and traditions in order to remove barriers of

standing and establish common affirmations. We work for the reunion of separated churches in the Presbyterian and Reformed family. We reach out to unfamiliar traditions and associations of churches.

In God's grace the one church has been given gifts "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13). The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in gratitude for God's grace and mercy, commits itself to faithful use of God's gifts in the search for fuller expression of the visible unity to which we are called.