

5/17/07  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
STATEMENT

**PRESBYTERIAN/EPISCOPAL BI-LATERAL DIALOGUE – REPORT TO SPONSORING AGENCIES: Episcopal SCEIR and Presbyterian CER - 1/19/07**

The members of the Episcopal/Presbyterian Bi-Lateral Dialogue acknowledge with appreciation the work of Churches Uniting in Christ and its Ministry Task Force and pledge to continue in collaboration with them as they further the efforts of CUIC.

We give thanks for the Joint Statement on the Minimum Wage and the Pastoral Letter in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; signed by the ten heads of communion. While we are not living into the full potential of our commitment to anti-racism, we see this as a sign of the greater work we could do together in our journey towards full communion.

We also give particular thanks for CUIC's implementation of our suggestion for a consultation on *episcopate*, held in St. Louis in October 2006. The meditations, presentations and group discussions were published in *Call to Unity* and have been of significant help to us in our conversations. They also stand to be an ongoing resource for future study of the nature of *episcopate*.

In our own dialogue, we have recognized and acknowledged authentic forms of ministry and oversight that are already present in our churches. Presbyterians have come to a deeper understanding and appreciation of personal expressions of *episcopate*. Episcopalians have recognized a need for greater lay involvement in the collegial *episcopate* of the church. We see our dialogue as a step toward the full reconciliation of our ministries.

Therefore, we have reached a point as a bilateral dialogue where we are able (as stated in the Meissen Agreement of 1988 between Anglican, Reformed and Lutheran traditions in Europe) to “acknowledge that personal and collegial oversight (*episcopate*) is embodied and exercised in our churches in a variety of forms, episcopal and non-episcopal, As a visible sign of the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, mission and ministry” (17.A.iv) with the expectation that “authorized ministers of our churches may, subject to the regulations of the churches and within the limits of their competence, carry out the tasks of their own office in congregations of the other churches when requested.” (17.A.iv).

We pledge ourselves to encourage and empower local Episcopal and Presbyterian initiatives in mission and ministry. To that end, we are examining existing relationships between Anglican and Reformed traditions around the world with the view towards working with the Episcopal Church Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations and the Presbyterian Church (USA) Committee on Ecumenical Relations in developing guidelines to facilitate our own local efforts and relationships as the next step in moving toward the ultimate goal of full communion between our churches, which is the gift and mandate given to us by our shared life in Christ.