

**The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations
Bishop Mason Retreat & Conference Center (Flower Mound, Texas)
January 16-19, 2001**

Minutes

Attending Members: The Very Rev. Donald Brown, Ms. Margaret J. Faulk, Mr. James Foster, Mr. John Harrison, Mrs. Diane Knippers, The Rev. C. Dana Krutz, Mrs. Elizabeth Noland, The Rev. Chris Rankin-Williams, The Rev. Sandra Richardson, The Rt. Rev. Douglas Theuner, Ms. Alice Webley, The Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra *Liaison from Executive Council:* Mrs. Shelley Vescovo. *Excused Members:* The Rt. Rev. Leo Frade, The Rt. Rev. William Otis Gregg, The Rt. Rev. Carolyn Irish, The Rt. Rev. Stephen Jecko, The Rt. Rev. William Persell, The Rev. Canon Ephraim Radner. *Ex Officio Members Present:* The Rev. Canon Robert Miner, EDEO and The Rev. Dr. Randy Lee, ELCA. *Staff/Consultants:* The Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting, The Rev. Tony Jewiss (General Convention Office), The Rev. Canon David Perry, The Rev. Dr. J. Robert Wright. *Absent:* Ms. Midge Roof.

SESSION 1: January 16, Tuesday (7 - 9pm)

The Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting opened the meeting with prayer.

The Rev. Canon David W. Perry discussed the schedule for our week's work, going over the agenda and making additions from committee member suggestions. We will need to address the matter of recognition of Lutheran confirmations. Also, we will need to study and respond to the ARCIC documents: *Gift of Authority, Dominus Iesus and Ut Unum Sint*. These will be addressed when we review the ARCIC dialogues later in the week.

The Rev. Cn. Perry introduced the Rev. Dr. J. Robert Wright of General Seminary who serves as consultant to the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. David pointed out that Fr. Wright is not our consultant but graciously serves as a resource for the committee.

Fr. Perry also introduced the Rt. Rev. C. Christopher Epting who will become David's replacement at the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in New York. David will be retiring as of February 9, 2001. Bishop Epting will begin his duties as Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations after April 15, 2001. The Committee was pleased to welcome Bishop Epting.

A major portion of our time was spent in introductions and catching up with one another.

No minutes from our October 1999 meeting were submitted for approval.

The Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra offered closing prayers.

SESSION 2: January 17, Wednesday (9am - Noon)

Morning Prayer was led by the Rev. Tony Jewiss of the General Convention Office. After prayers, the morning was spent in reading the report of SCER to the General Convention; Constitutions and Canons explaining the mandate of SCER; resolution action taken by General Convention; and other relevant documentation.

At 11am we reconvened with the Very Rev. Don Brown presiding. Our first order of business was the election of our officers:

The Rt. Rev. Leo Frade, nominated by the Rt. Rev. Douglas Theuner/ seconded by the Rev. Dan Krutz. Unanimously elected chair.

The Very Rev. Donald Brown, nominated by the Rev. Dan Krutz/ seconded by the Rev. Sandra Richardson. Unanimously elected vice-chair.

Ms. Margaret Faulk, nominated by the Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra/ seconded by the Rev. Sandra Richardson. Unanimously elected secretary.

Discussion of Canons and our mandate

Beth Noland raised the question of a possible name change for the SCER. Should the proper title of this committee be the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relation? If so, then we need to propose a canonical change at the next Convention. This will be considered as part of our work during the Triennium. At present Presiding Bishop has given SCER the oversight of interfaith relations. The interfaith effort has its own working committee and will be meeting during the Triennium, reporting to SCER as necessary. The Rev. Cn. Perry stated that the title SCER is appropriate but the office has been renamed: Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. Some of our materials were inadvertently misnamed to include the office nomenclature.

The Rev. Robert Wright reminded us of the importance of our interfaith efforts. He suggested the need to signal this importance through the positioning of the Interfaith Relations Committee. Bishop Epting also explained “subsidiarity” that is the appropriate level at which our interfaith efforts might be conducted. For example, he stated that perhaps we should be working with the WCC on relationships with world Islam and Judaism. The Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra was helpful in explaining that the Roman Catholic Church keeps its ecumenical and interfaith efforts separate on the theological level. However, on the administrative, practical level there is more interaction. The Rev. Cn. Perry pointed out that we are very involved with interfaith relations through our support of the NCCC and the staff person we provide for this effort at NCCC. We also work through the WCC on interfaith matters. John Harrison stated that the ELCA structure has ecumenical and interfaith activity combined.

Dr. Wright suggested that SCER look at how our ecumenical partners handle their interfaith conversations. Bob Wright, Ellen Wondra, Beth Noland and Dan Krutz offered to look into this matter and to report back to us at our October 2001 meeting. We look forward to their report.

Calendar of Meetings for the Triennium

All meetings of SCER will start at 5pm of day one and end at noon on the last day.

2001	October 23 rd to 27 th	Chicago
2002	March 19 th to 22 nd	Location to be determined
2002	October 21 st to 25 th	Location to be determined Bluebook prep meeting
2003	February 25 th to 28 th	Tentative meeting

Noon Prayers led by the Rt. Rev. Douglas Theuner.

SESSION 3: January 17, Wednesday (2 - 5pm)

We continued our conversations from the morning session. The Rev. Cn. David Perry explained that the staff of the Ecumenical and Interfaith Office reports directly to the Presiding Bishop, not to the General Convention. However, the mandate for SCER comes from the General Convention. While we propose items on the ecumenical agenda for General Convention's consideration, we are responsible also for moving forward the agenda as passed in the resolutions of General Convention. Also, David Perry requested that we make suggestions of individuals who would be willing to serve on various ecumenical and interfaith dialogues/ task forces/ committees/conversations. The Presiding Bishop makes these appointments but we would like to deepen our list of available persons for this work.

Preplanning for Blue Book Preparation

David Perry explained that we are behind in some of our ecumenical efforts because of the time and personnel required preparing the SCER report to the General Convention. He asked that the liaison persons for each dialogue prepare the reports for the Blue Book. That will reduce or facilitate staff time spent on this activity. Also, if you are a liaison, you should have a preliminary, if not complete report, ready to forward to the chair of SCER by our meeting in October 2002. We will be working on the preparation of our report for the Blue Book at that meeting.

Discussion of Ecumenical and Interfaith Actions of General Convention, Denver, July 2000

We discussed the resolutions that require SCER action during the Triennium:

A039 – Bilateral Dialogue with Presbyterian Church, USA

The Rev. David Perry reported that he has received an encouraging letter from his counterpart in the Presbyterian Church USA. They are looking forward to the start of the dialogue. A major issue between us is the theological understanding of the role and function of the historic episcopate. The Rt. Rev. Douglas Theuner asked Dr. Wright to explain the "Celtic model" for understanding the episcopate. Dr. Wright noted that there is not much research on this idea, as we don't have substantial records of the church using this model. That being stated, Fr. Wright went on to explain that the Celtic model comes from the Irish monastic tradition. In this framework, the leader/bishop is chosen for his/her spiritual depth not for his/her administrative ability. The bishop in this case is not the administrator of the diocese, but is overseer of the diocese's spiritual health. Fr. Wright directed our attention to BCP, p. 855 in the Catechism that lists the ministry of a bishop.

The Rt. Rev. Douglas Theuner volunteered to serve as the liaison from the committee, if not as a member of the dialogue itself. The Rev. Don Brown stated that he would circulate a sign-up sheet for us to indicate the particular dialogues we're interested in serving on.

A043 – Date for Common Easter

Although this resolution requires no action from SCER, there were questions about the calculation for the date of Easter. The Rev. Dan Krutz pointed out that the wording of the resolution was taken directly from the 1998 Lambeth Conference resolution on this issue. The Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra called our attention to BCP, p. 15 that establishes the formula for dating Easter. The Rev. Cn. David Perry will consult with the ACC Ecumenical Office and notes that we have already forwarded our positive response to celebrating a common date for Easter.

A135a – Commits Episcopal Church to Engagement and Dialogue with Churches Uniting in Christ

General Convention has charged SCER with preparing a process for our involvement with CUIC. This will be part of our work this Triennium. We had an involved discussion of COCU/CUIC.

1. Anti-racism. The Rev. Dan Krutz reminded us that the work against anti-racism is a major portion of the Church's work in the world. The legacy of slavery and racism is at the heart of our separation from the Historic Black Churches.

We do support the anti-racism focus of COCU/CUIC. However, during conversations we came to the conclusion that anti-racism cannot be the sole indicator of our participation in COCU/CUIC. We admit that we have much to do in this area of concern. The Rev. Cn. Perry pointed out that we need better communication within our own commission system as people doing social justice work often are not aware of the ecumenical implications of their work.

2. Celebration of inaugurating the CUIC process.

Consultation on Church Union
Highland Station, P.O. Box 2143, Lowell, MA 01851
Phone: (978) 453 - 2842, Fax: (978) 441 - 0692

January 2001

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

In January of 2002, God willing, nine churches will enter a new relationship with one another, to be called *Churches Uniting in Christ*. These churches - African Methodist Episcopal Church, African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Episcopal Church, International Council of Community Churches, Presbyterian Church (USA), United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Church - have been together for more than thirty years in the Consultation on Church Union. Seven of these churches

have already officially voted to become Churches Uniting in Christ; and the other two, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ, will act on the proposal next summer.

We, the undersigned leaders, believe that the new relationship will bring our churches closer to that unity for which our Lord prayed on the last night of his life: "May they (the disciples and those who follow them) all be one ... that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:20). We give thanks to God for having brought us this far.

While the new relationship will be based on eight visible marks of unity and will include a number of commitments, none is more important than the shared resolve to combat racism. Our churches have been divided by confessional differences, and these are important; but surely our deepest and most painful separations have stemmed from the experience of slavery and racism. Any effort to realize visible communion among us must pay primary attention to this reality. Thus, one of the marks of unity to which the churches bind themselves is "intentional commitment to promote unity with wholeness and to oppose all marginalization and exclusion in church and society based upon such things as race...." Combating racism will be a hallmark of Churches Uniting in Christ.

We who sign this letter believe that racism is a sin, an offense against God. Those of us from predominately white churches ask forgiveness for the ways that we and our churches have participated in this evil. We ask God to heal us and to strengthen our witness to the gospel of God's inclusive love through Churches Uniting in Christ.

Our churches are committing to this struggle against racism for two primary reasons:

1. Racism which manifests itself as white skin privilege is based on power plus prejudice, and it is difficult for African - American, Asian American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Native American, and Pacific Islander "...congregations and members to be fully convinced of the call of their European - American counterparts for unity as equals, if the latter are not willing to struggle to dismantle the obstacles to social, political, and economic equality presented by white privilege..." (Report of COCU's 18th Plenary).

2. Authentic community among Churches Uniting in Christ will be impossible to achieve if "by their unquestioning acceptance of the unjust gains granted by an unjust system, white members of this community continue their tacit complicity with this unjust social order that denies fullness of life" to African - Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, Middle Easterners, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders.

The effort of our churches to overcome racism will call us to a mighty struggle that, with God's help, will enable us to become more truly the church. Racism is a persistent and ubiquitous evil, a heresy, and a denial of God's mighty acts of creation and redemption. It is a battle against "principalities and powers, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). But the struggle will manifest our unity in a way that will compel the world around us to notice, to hear the gospel more clearly, and to take the witness and mission of the church more seriously. We will manifest a unity that is both credible and compelling. "It will require both the

conversion of individuals and the transformation of the churches themselves" (Report of the 18th Plenary).

We, leaders of these nine communions, ask for your prayers, as our churches enter this new relationship. At this time of year, when we remember the prophetic ministry of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we also ask for your commitment to a renewed struggle against racism, both in your congregation and in your own life, "that the world may believe."

In Christ,

Bishop William P. DeVeaux <i>Presiding Bishop African Methodist Episcopal Church</i>	Bishop Milton Alexander Williams <i>Presiding Bishop African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church</i>	The Rev. Dr. Richard L. Hamm <i>General Minister & President Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)</i>
Bishop Nathaniel L. Linsey <i>Senior Bishop, Second Episcopal Dist. Christian Methodist Episcopal Church</i>	The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold <i>Presiding Bishop and Primate The Episcopal Church, USA</i>	The Rev. Michael E. Livingston <i>Executive Director International Council of Community Churches</i>
The Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick <i>Stated Clerk of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)</i>	The Rev. John H. Thomas <i>General Minister and President United Church of Christ The United Methodist Church</i>	Bishop Melvin G. Talbert <i>Ecumenical Officer United Methodist Council of Bishops</i>

Much of our discussion focused on the letter from the Executive Committee of COCU/CUIC announcing the inaugural celebration for CUIC. While we want to celebrate this renewing process for COCU/CUIC and be supportive of CUIC, we are not at the point of full membership in the organization. After further discussion, Bishop Theuner suggested the following:

Whereas, the 73rd General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed Resolution A135 on "Ecumenism: Consultation on Church Union" in which it was:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 73rd General Convention of The Episcopal Church receives with enthusiasm the proposal of the Executive Committee of the Consultation on Church Union (COCU), "Recommendation to the Churches for a New Relationship, Churches Uniting in Christ," (BB, pp. 86-89)October 19, 1999; and commits itself to continuing participation in COCU and to a process of engagement and dialogue beginning in 2002 with inauguration of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC); and be it further

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention of The Episcopal Church acknowledges with appreciation the intention of COCU members "to adopt the three-fold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon as part of the process of ministerial reconciliation" (BB, p.88) as well as its

affirmation "that a reconciled ministry shall include bishops who 'stand in continuity with the historic ministry of bishops as that ministry has been maintained through the ages.'"; and be it further

Resolved, That we reiterate our commitment to the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral and commend it as a basis of theological dialogue in CUIC; and be it further

Resolved, That we enthusiastically commit ourselves to COCU's "Call to Christian Commitment and Action to Combat Racism."

Now therefore, be it resolved, that the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations looks forward to the participation of the Episcopal Church in the inauguration of Church Uniting in Christ (CUIC) in 2002; and be it

Further resolved, that the Executive Committee of COCU be requested to establish, prior to the inauguration, a process whereby issues regarding mutual recognition and reconciliation of ordained ministries may be resolved before the establishment of full communion of the member churches.

Moved by Bishop Theuner/ seconded by the Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra. *Passed unanimously by the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, January 18, 2001.*

After further discussion, the committee asked that the Rev. Perry contact Michael Kinnamon, Executive Director of COCU/CUIC and ask him to be with us at our October meeting in Chicago.

The Rev. Dan Krutz suggested that we be proactive and initiate a consultation on the episcopate with the nine churches of COCU/CUIC.

The SCER proposes that Executive Committee of COCU/CUIC and the Episcopal Church conduct a consultation on the episcopate during the fall of 2001 before the inaugural celebration in January 2001.

Moved by the Rev. Dan Krutz/seconded by the Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra. *Passed unanimously.*

If the COCU/CUIC Executive Committee invites him, Bishop Theuner will attend the meeting of that group March 19th-21st, 2001 in Worcester, MA.

D047a - SCER and PB to Initiate a Dialogue with Groups Calling themselves "Continuing Anglican Churches"

The Rev. Cn. Perry reported that there has been no movement on this issue. Also, he reported that the Reformed Episcopal Church has declined to enter dialogue with us. Dr. Wright suggested that Dr. Don Armentrout of University of the South be asked to a future meeting of SCER. His interest and knowledge of this topic may be helpful to the committee. Also, The Rev.

Cn. Perry indicated that Keith Ackerman has an interest in this resolution and is in conversation with some members of the “continuing Anglican Churches”.

Bishop Theuner pointed out that we are obligated to try to initiate a dialogue and to make recommendations to the Presiding Bishop.

In response to D047a, SCER recommends to the Ecumenical Office and to the Presiding Bishop that an invitation be extended to The Rt. Rev. Keith Ackerman to attend the next SCER meeting in October, 2001 to assist us in our deliberations on this matter.

Moved by Bishop Theuner/seconded by Mrs. Beth Noland. *Passed unanimously.*

D051 – Conversations with Pentecostal Churches

There seems to be no way to focus our efforts to initiate a conversation with these churches. The Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra suggested a small task force would be an appropriate tool for this work. The Rev. Dan Krutz suggested that The Rev. Robbie of Fuller Seminary and Liz Mellon at Graymoor Institute would be good resource persons for SCER.

By consensus, SCER requested that the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations send a letter to each of these individuals soliciting their response to resolution D051. The Rev. Cn. Perry said that the Office would send the appropriate materials to them. We look forward to their response on this issue.

The Rev. Dr. Wright suggested that we invite them to a future meeting of SCER.

D105 – Affirms Conversations with National Association of Evangelicals on Matters of Ethics and Theology

Diane Knippers noted that the NCCC is a flash point with members of the National Association of Evangelicals so we can't use the NCCC as a vehicle for beginning discussions. The Rev. Cn. Perry suggested that this is an area where we might work with the Anglican Consultative Council on Ecumenical Relations. Diane Knippers noted that there is to be a meeting of World Evangelical Fellowship in Dallas this spring. It might be helpful if we could send an observer from SCER to this gathering. Shelly Vescovo has agreed to go to the meeting if she is invited. Diane Knippers will seek an invitation for Shelly.

If invited, Shelly Vescovo will serve as an observer from SCER to the World Evangelical Fellowship meeting in Dallas during March 2001. Shelly will report to the SCER at its next meeting in October 2001.

Moved by Mr. John Harrison/seconded by Mrs. Beth Noland. *Passed unanimously.*

Thanks to Midge Roof

The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, meeting in Flower Mound, Texas, expresses its gratitude to Midge Roof for (1) her service to the Church these past two years as

Associate Deputy for Ecumenical Relations, (2) her many years of service as EDEO President, and (3) her continuing service as a member of the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee.

Moved by the Rev. Saundra Richardson/seconded by Mr. John Harrison. *Passed unanimously.*

SESSION 4 not required.

SESSION 5: January 18, Thursday (9am - Noon)

AM prayers led by Margaret Faulk, Jim Foster, the Rev. Bob Miner, and Alice Webley (*from Day 1 of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*)

The morning session was spent discussing our full communion relationship with the ELCA. As a review for continuing members and an introduction for new members, The Rev. Cn. Perry and the Rev. Dr. Randall Lee guided us in looking at the pamphlet, "Called to Common Mission". We particularly studied p.6, para 14 (authenticity of each other's ordained ministries) and para 16 (Episcopal Church's temporary suspension of the preface to the ordinal); p.7, para 20 (ELCA agrees to make constitutional and liturgical provision that a bishop provide laying-on-of-hands at the ordination of clergy). Members are asked to familiarize themselves this material, as we will be referring to it in future meetings.

Dr. Wright called our attention to the Catechism, p. 860, BCP as an aid to our understanding of the issues of ordination. We might also review the Catechism, "The Church", p. 854; "The Ministry", p. 855.

The Rev. Perry distributed the "Charter: Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee". This outlines the procedures and mandate of LECC.

Charter
Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee (LECC)
(Adopted Jan. 9, 2001)

Name: The Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee

Composition and Meetings: Each church body will be represented by seven voting persons. Each of the members will serve at the will of the individual's parent body, and a pattern of rotation will be formulated. Staff services will be provided by the two ecumenical departments. When desired, consultants may be used for deliberations on specific questions.

The committee shall meet at least twice a year, and will report annually to the participating churches on the status of interchurch activities.

Living into full communion this committee will work:

- To encourage the development of new levels of trust, cooperation, and mission between our two churches,
- To encourage and assist in the planning of new cooperative mission and ministry work,
- To encourage and assist in supporting ongoing cooperative ministries between our two

- churches,
- To encourage communication of common mission work between our two churches to our churches,
 - To encourage prayer in support of living into full communion by our two churches and for the work of this committee;

And will work with appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and staff of the two churches concerning ecumenical, doctrinal, education, pastoral, social, ethical, and liturgical matters as may arise:

- To encourage and assist faithful and open communication of the work of this committee to and from the appropriate decision-making bodies, boards, committees, commissions, staff, and members of our two churches,
- To encourage and assist processes of decision-making on fundamental matters through appropriate channels in a spirit of mutual affirmation and admonition.

This charter reflects the mandate given to this committee as called for in paragraphs 23 and 24 of “Called to Common Mission,” as follows:

“To assist in joint planning for mission, both churches authorize the establishment of a joint commission, fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches. Its purpose will be consultative, to facilitate mutual support and advice as well as common decision-making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future. The joint commission will work with the appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and staff of the two churches concerning such ecumenical, doctrinal, pastoral, and liturgical matters as may arise, always subject to approval by the appropriate decision-making bodies of the two churches” (“Called to Common Mission,” paragraph 23)

“Each church promises to issue no official commentary on this text that has not been accepted by the joint commission as a legitimate interpretation thereof” (“Called to Common Mission,” paragraph 24).

Guidelines and Worship Resources for the Celebration of Full Communion was also distributed to SCER. The dioceses of both churches have received this material.

The Orderly Exchange of Pastors and Priests Under Called to Common Mission: Principles and Guidelines (Green Book) was distributed. This document has been distributed to the bishops of both churches. We are asked to become familiar with the document as we may be referring to it during future meetings. The Rev. Dr. Lee explained the three categories of service that is found on p.5-6 of this document. The Rev. Saundra Richardson asked if lay employees would be able to move between the churches and retain their benefits. The Rev. Cn. Perry stated that the Pension Fund is working on this issue.

Noon prayer led by The Rev. Dan Krutz

SESSION 6: January 18, Thursday (1:30 - 5:30pm) Continuation from AM discussions.

We discussed the January 12, 2001 letter from The Rev. Lowell G. Almen, Secretary of ELCA, to Presiding Bishop Griswold.

January 12, 2001

The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Bishop Griswold:

Grace and peace be with you in this season of Epiphany, a time when we are reminded anew of God's call to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world.

I am writing on behalf of the Reverend H. George Anderson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. As you know, our two churches have agreed to consult with one another on matters related to the implementation of "Called to Common Mission," the document that establishes the relationship of full communion between our two churches. Specifically, this is a request that a proposal be placed before the appropriate entities of our two churches in order to establish a small team (perhaps three or no more than four persons from each church) for consultation on various proposals related to the implementation of "Called to Common Mission." At this time, the most urgent of these proposals in need of conversation is the suggestion that exceptions to the rule of ordination of candidates for the pastoral ministry by a bishop be allowed under certain circumstances and after appropriate consultation.

As you may know, concern has been expressed by some in our church who see the requirement of episcopal ordination as participation in a superstitious ordinance of human origin. This minority insists that to require our candidates to be ordained by a bishop will offend the conscience of some of our candidates. We fully understand and appreciate your church's attention to episcopal ordination of priests and your desire, one day, to reinstate the Preface to the Ordinal after this practice of episcopal ordination is implemented throughout our church. However, for pastoral reasons, we ask that you enter into discussion with us about the possibility of occasional exceptions wherein an appointed person on the clergy roster of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America would preside at an ordination. It is not our desire to reverse this key provision but rather to discuss with you the possibility of a pastoral means of implementing "Called to Common Mission" that both recognizes the theological concerns within this church while seeking to live fully and faithfully in full communion with The Episcopal Church.

During the discussion of exceptions within our Conference of Bishops, three elements have been particularly important:

- that it be a pastoral decision of the synodical bishop informed by guidelines developed by the Division for Ministry in consultation with the Conference of Bishops;

- that the bishop consult with the presiding bishop of this church to consider the ecumenical implications of the action; and
- that the bishop receive the advice of the synod council under the guidelines.

The possible amendment for the ELCA constitution currently being studied reads as follows:
 7.31.17. Ordination in Unusual Circumstances. For pastoral reasons in unusual circumstances, a synodical bishop may provide for the ordination by another pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America of an approved candidate who has received and accepted a properly issued, duly attested letter of call for the office of ordained ministry. Prior to authorization of such an ordination, the bishop of the synod of the candidate's first call shall consult with the presiding bishop as this church's chief ecumenical officer and shall seek the advice of the Synod Council. The pastoral decision of the synodical bishop shall be informed by guidelines developed by the Division for Ministry, reviewed by the Conference of Bishops, and adopted by the Church Council.

As this matter has been discussed by the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a deep desire was expressed to conduct these conversations with the members of the ELCA Conference of Bishops, other groups within our church, and with our ecumenical partners. The hope is that such conversations can take place prior to the April 2001 meeting of the ELCA Church Council, at which time the Church Council will decide whether or not to recommend this or a similar amendment to the 2001 Churchwide Assembly for action.

It is our longing and desire that we may, together, discover a way through this matter that will allow our newly established relationship of full communion to deepen and grow for the sake of the Gospel.

Sincerely,
 The Rev. Lowell G. Almen, Secretary

xc: The Reverend Canon David W. Perry
 Presiding Bishop George Anderson
 Dr. Daniel F. Martensen

Rev. Almen, writing on behalf of Rev. H. George Anderson, Presiding Bishop of ELCA, asks that we form a small team of persons who will serve as consultants on various proposals to the implementation of Called to Common Mission. The Rev. Cn. Perry explained that this group would be responsible to the LECC and would be viewed as consultants/experts not policy formulators. Our representatives to this small group are:

- The Rt. Rev. Leo Frade, chair of SCER
- The Very Rev. Don Brown, vice-chair of SCER
- The Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra
- The Rt. Rev. Rusty Kimsey, former chair of SCER
- The Rev. Dr. Robert Wright, Staff
- The Rt. Rev. Chris Epting, Staff

The first issue to be addressed will be ELCA's concern that there be a limited/occasional exception to rule of ordination of candidates for the pastoral ministry. There is concern for the current class of graduating seminarians who entered the ELCA ordination process with certain expectations for ordination. Now that process has been changed and they are in the middle of the change as opposed to future seminarians who will enter the ELCA ordination process after the CCM and will be aware of the process from the start. SCER discussed this issue at length. The Rev. Dr. Lee responded to our questions on the matter and provided necessary background to facilitate our understanding of the problems involved for the ELCA. The Rev. Cn. Perry also explained that there have been questions raised concerning the status of ELCA confirmations. While we celebrate our full communion with one another, we are aware that living into the meaning of this agreement will require a great deal of patience and work. SCER is committed to assisting in any way it possibly can to the success of full communion.

The Rev. Perry distributed "Called to Full Communion: The Waterloo Declaration", the proposed text to be considered by the National Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, Waterloo, Ontario, 2001. Please read for the next meeting of SCER.

The SCER thanks The Rev. William Norgren

Resolved, that the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations hereby express its gratitude to The Rev. William A. Norgren, former Ecumenical Officer of this Church, for his consistent diligence and generous assistance, as a consultant to SCER and the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, throughout the process leading to Full Communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Moved by the Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra/seconded by Jim Foster. *Passed unanimously.*

Report on dialogues

The Rev. Cn. Perry distributed his prepared report to the committee. He responded to questions and gave brief explanation of the various dialogues. The Rev. Dr. Wright expanded upon the Orthodox materials. We are asked to read and respond to the "Covenanting for Mutual Recognition and Reconciliation between the Anglican Church of Australia and the Lutheran Church of Australia. Please read the proposal and be prepared to discuss the material at our next meeting. Also, read the report presented by the Rev. Cn. Perry.

UPDATE

*for Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations
January 16-19, 2001*

The Office

With the resignation and retirement of David W. Perry, February 2001, staff changes will occur in the office. The Presiding Bishop has appointed the Right Reverend Christopher Epting as the Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations. Bishop Epting will assume that post- April, 2001. Midge Roof will leave her post as Associate Deputy, February 2001 and the position she

has held has been posted. Ms. Jean Schwarz continues as the support staff for the office. Mr. Ned Morris will continue as intern in the office until his graduation from GTS in June, 2001. Bishop Epting has asked Robert Wright to continue as theological consultant to the EIR office.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Episcopal Church

In addition to many local/regional celebrations of the relationship of full communion between the two churches, the National Celebration occurred on January 6 at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. Representatives from the dioceses (90) and synods of the two churches processed and were seated in the "places of honor". The Eucharist and Renewal of Baptismal vows focused the celebration on mission and our common life and witness together.

"Guidelines" have been prepared to assist in local/regional celebrations. These suggestions, including the liturgical texts of the January 6 event, have been sent to diocesan bishops, EDEO officers and are available on the EC web site and the ELCA web site. These "guidelines" will be helpful in celebrations which will occur in the next months.

A Joint Coordinating Committee is being appointed (7 members from each church) to assist in enabling and assisting in the common mission of the two churches. It will meet following the celebration, January 8 and 9. The Episcopal Church representatives include:

The Right Reverend Carolyn T. Irish, Diocese of Utah

The Right Reverend Leo Frade, Diocese of Southeast Florida

The Reverend Grant Abbott, St. Matthew's parish, St. Paul, Minnesota

The Very Reverend Donald Brown, Dean, Trinity Cathedral, Sacramento, California

The Reverend Dr. Alfred Moss, Professor, University of Maryland (former Joint Coordinating Committee member)

Ms. Emily Perow, Youth Coordinator, Diocese of Connecticut

Ms. Midge Roof, Past EDEO President and Associate Deputy EIR

The 1999 Report of the SCER to General Convention is commended to you for detailed information on the EC's ecumenical commitments. **

InterAnglican Ecumenical Relations Commission

Lambeth Conference called for the creation of an inter Anglican body which would address ecumenical concerns across the communion. Its first meeting was held in Nassau in early December. Robert Wright and David Perry serve as consultants to this commission. The commission will look at provincial agreements and search for common language and understanding for those ecumenical commitments.

EC representatives participate in several International Ecumenical Commission including: Anglican Orthodox Commission; Anglican-Oriental Orthodox Commission; Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission; Bilateral Commission.

The Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations

First meeting of the new SCER will be held in Dallas, Texas, January 16-19, 2001. Membership includes:

The Very Rev. Donald Brown (convenor) Sacramento, California

Ms. Margaret Faulk, Nashua, New Hampshire

Mr. James Foster Esq., The Dalles, Oregon
The Right Rev. Leopold Frade, Miami, Florida
Mr. John Harrison, Esq., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
The Right Rev. Carolyn T. Irish, Salt Lake City, Utah
The Right Rev. Stephen Jecko, Jacksonville, Florida
Ms. Diane L. Knippers, Washington, DC
The Rev. Charles Dana Krutz, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Mrs. Elizabeth Noland, Santa Fe, New Mexico
The Rev. Canon Ephraim Radner, Pueblo, Colorado
The Rev. Chris Rankin-Williams, Santa Barbara, California
The Rev. Saundra Richardson, Detroit, Michigan
The Right Rev. Douglas E. Theuner, Concord, New Hampshire
Ms. Shelly Vescovo, Dallas, Texas (Executive Council liaison)
Ms. Alice Webley, Grand Rapids, Michigan
The Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra, Rochester, New York
The Right Rev. Christopher Epting (staff)
Associate Deputy for EIR (staff)
The Rev. Canon Robert Miner (EDEO President)
The Rev. Canon Robert Wright (consultant to the Office EIR)

National Council of Churches of Christ, USA

Held its General Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia in November. The EC delegation of 10 is helping to shape the new vision and structure for the Council. Patrick Mauney is the President of Church World Service and Witness and had played a key role in the renewal of that body's structure and relationship to the NCCC.

The NCCC budget for 2001 is balanced and it is expected that the new structure and direction for the NCCC will find creative efforts in 2001 under the leadership of General Secretary Robert Edgar. The EC plays a role in that shaping.

The World Council of Churches

Dr. Pamela Chinnis serves as the EC representative on the Central Committee. (She serves on the program and budget committees.) The next Central Committee meeting is in Potsdam, Germany in early February. The EC currently has commissioners from our church serving on the Education Commission and Faith and Order.

Roman Catholic-Episcopal Relations

The national Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue met in September at the College of Preachers. It continues its work on the matters of authority. Bishop Ted Gulick is the Episcopal co-chair for the dialogue. A March meeting in Baltimore is scheduled for the next dialogue session.

In May 2000 a gathering of primates of the Anglican Church and RC Archbishops was held near Toronto. The statement issued after the meeting reaffirmed our common journey together and urged a closer partnership in witness and local "engagements". Bishop Griswold and Bishop Gulick participated in the meeting. ** A Joint Unity Committee will be appointed shortly to carry out the commitments made at that consultation.

Presiding Bishop Griswold continues as the Anglican co-chair of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission. It met in Paris this past August.

In spite of the difficulties of some recently issues RC texts (*Dominus Iesus*)** the dialogue and "practical" relationships continue strong.

The work and witness of the Anglican Centre in Rome is commended to the EC. William Franklin serves on the Board which Bishop Griswold chairs. American Friends of the Anglican Centre seek study and financial participation in the EC.

Dialogues

Moravian -EC

First session was held in September 2000. Bishop Gary Gloster chairs the dialogue on the EC side.

Orthodox and EC dialogue

This dialogue will resume in the spring, 2001. Bishop Richard Grein co-chairs the dialogue.

Joint Coordinating Committee Russian Orthodox Church and EC

meeting pending, Bishop Roger White co-chairs the committee.

Pending dialogues

United Methodist Church and EC; Presbyterian Church USA and EC

General Convention, Denver 1999 Actions

Urged conversation with churches calling themselves "Continuing Anglican Churches

Urged conversation with the National Association of Evangelicals on matter of ethics and theology

Urged conversations with Pentecostal churches, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals in a broadened ecumenical table. (see General Convention 1999 actions summary).

Consultation on Church Unity/Churches Uniting in Christ

General Convention in Denver authorized the EC to continue in the conversations towards common affirmation of ministry and mission. Lucinda Laird and Ted Gulick represent the EC on the Executive Committee. Heads of Communion of member churches of COCU recently issued a statement of common anti-racism concerns and witness.

EC will develop consultations and conversations to address the differences, particularly regarding ministry issues. (Note that three historically black African American Methodist churches participate in COCU/CUIC).**

Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (EDEO) **

The Rev. Canon Robert Miner is president of this body which assists the diocesan in ecumenical matters. A provincial structure attempts to collaborate and share encouraging models and projects for ecumenical life in the dioceses. Dioceses contribute annual dues for the support of these efforts.

Full Communion Partners:

EC Full Communion partners include: The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht; Philippine Independent Church and the Mar Thoma Church and the Churches of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Interfaith Relations Committee

Meeting pending appointment of Associate Deputy EIR. The Rev. David Eckel represents EIR at National Council of Churches Interfaith committee.

***Check the Episcopal Church web site and the Anglican Communion web site for documentation related to these meetings.*

Prepared by the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

David W. Perry and Midge Roof - 1-800-334-7626 ext 6127

January 2, 2001

Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical Officers (EDEO)

The Rev. Bob Miner spoke on the National Workshop for Christian Unity. This year the Workshop will meet at San Diego, April 30th to May 3rd. The workshops will be held at the Hanalei Hotel. Some of the topics include authority in the church; Pentecostal churches and the ecumenical movement; and ecumenical approaches to interreligious dialogue. All new members of SCER were encouraged to attend the NWCU meeting and participate in the workshops and worship experiences of the meeting.

EDEO is anxious to be helpful for the SCER by providing educational support to the dioceses/parishes or providing research data for the work of SCER.

We adjourned at 5:15pm.

At 5:30pm the Eucharist was celebrated by the Rev. Dr. Randall.

SESSION 7: January 19, Friday (9am - Noon)

The Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra and the Rev. Dr. Wright led us through a discussion of the ARCIC dialogues. The Rev. Cn. Perry distributed the following materials: *Dominus Iesus*: on the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church, from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Church (Vatican), *The Gift of Authority* from the Anglican-Roman Catholic Dialogue and *Ut Unum Sint*, John Paul II/Encyclical.

Please read this material carefully and be prepared to discuss all three of the documents at the October 2001 meeting. We will be working through the triennium to prepare/recommend our response to these three documents.

The Rev. Dr. Wondra provided us with background on the 14-20 May 2000 meeting of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops held at Mississauga, Canada. She distributed "Communion in Mission" statement of that meeting and the "Action Plan to Implement Communion in Mission". We again visited BCP, p.855 that explains our understanding of who the ministers of the church are: lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons. She proposed the following:

Resolution of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations, a canonical interim body of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church; passed at its meeting of January 16-19, 2001; on the Joint Unity Commission between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church.

Resolved, that the SCER welcomes with joy and enthusiasm the agreed statement, "Communion in Mission", together with its action plan, including the work of the Joint Unity Commission; and be it further

Resolved, that the SCER believes strongly that the Joint Unity Commission should include, as well as a majority of bishops, a significant number of lay persons, deacons, and priests from both churches, and from many countries of the world; all participants having voice and vote; and be it further

Resolved, that the SCER strongly urges and requests that the Joint Unity Commission reflect both the full participation of women and men, and the broad racial and ethnic diversity of the catholic church; and be it further

Resolved, that the SCER requests that the Presiding Bishop and the Deputy for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations speedily convey this resolution to the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Office, the Anglican co-chair of ARCIC, the Ecumenical Officer of the Anglican Communion Office, the Anglican co-chair of ARCUSA; and send copies of the resolution to their Roman Catholic counterparts.

Explanation

1. The long-standing tradition and practice of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, is to involve lay people, priests and deacons in the councils of the church and in decision-making. This tradition, which is also widely expressed as a hope within the Roman Catholic Church, is based in our Anglican understanding of the priesthood of all believers by virtue of baptism, and of the particular ministry of bishops within, not from the whole Body of Christ. Thus, the ministry of bishops includes special concern for unity, but not sole and certainly not exclusive concern.
2. The three authority documents of ARCIC underscore the role and responsibility of all Christians in the unity of the church and participation in its councils. Responses to these documents- including the official responses from the churches of the Anglican Communion to Authority I and II- consistently reiterate this point.

3. We consider such representation and full participation essential to the Joint Unity Commission's effectiveness and its adequate reception in the Episcopal Church and elsewhere in the Anglican Communion.

Moved by the Rev. Dr. Ellen Wondra/seconded by the Rt. Rev. Douglas Theuner. *Passed unanimously.*

Other topics discussed and continuing agenda

1. Development of younger ecumenists. The Rev. Christopher Rankin-Williams will develop some ideas on this topic for our consideration at the October 2001 meeting. The Rev. Miner (EDEO) spoke about the program at the Irish School of Ecumenics in Dublin. The Rev. Cn. David Perry called our attention to the Allen Fund and the various study programs of the WCC at Bossey.
2. Improving our internal communications. The Rev. Christopher Rankin-Williams will investigate setting us up as an e-group. He explained the process to SCER and assured the committee that he could guarantee privacy for us.
3. Response to the various materials distributed especially *The Gift of Authority*.
4. Consideration/study of Biblical arguments for ecumenism.
5. Improved communications between SCER and the dialogue teams. They need our feedback.
6. Interfaith work – especially conversations with Muslims needs to be engaged early in the triennium.
7. Questions:
 - What is ecumenism in the non-denominational era?
 - How may EDEO be helpful with the Evangelical conversations?
 - What is our baseline for conversations with Evangelicals? Context?
 - How may EDEO and LERN serve the SCER?
 - What is the role and place of interfaith work in the SCER?
8. Policies needed:
 - For non-ELCA clergy
 - For Old Catholic clergy
 - For reception of clergy from denominations not in communion with us
 - Protocols for communion invitations

The meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Faulk, Secretary