

**BILATERAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN A IGREJA EPISCOPAL ANGLICANA DO
BRASIL**

AND

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE UNITED STATES

BACKGROUND

The Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil (IEAB) was part of the Episcopal Church of the United States for some eighty years. As the autonomy process was completed for the Church in Brazil, no formal agreement was reached between these two churches regarding the terms of their separation and the continuing relationship between them. The Episcopal Church of Brazil found herself isolated and separated from the U.S. Episcopal Church and therefore initiated a number of conversations with the Episcopal Church USA over the years following autonomy, in search of support, both financial and legal.

In 1987, Provincial Secretary Jubal Neves visited the US Episcopal Church and ECUSA staff officer Ricardo Potter-Norman visited Brazil. In 1988, formal communication about the needs of the Brazilian Church was relayed to Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning by the Brazilian Primate Dom Olavo Ventura Luiz. Bishop Luiz visited the US Episcopal Church and Ms. Judy Gillespie, Executive for World Mission, visited the Brazilian Church for the Confelider Conference (IEAB leaders) and the Synod meeting in the same year. Presiding Bishop Browning and Bishop Luiz also had conversations at the Lambeth Conference in 1988. In 1989, Canon Jubal Neves and Bishop Olavo Luiz met with Presiding Bishop Browning and presented "Plano 90", their five-year plan for development of mission and ministry in the Brazilian Church. The following year, Brazil was the site of a Partners in Mission Consultation. That same year (1990) Presiding Bishop Browning visited Brazil to participate in the celebration of the Centennial of the Brazilian Church. At that time, he was asked for a response to the series of conversations that had been held with him and various other US Church staff during the preceding four years.

Accordingly, Bishop Luiz and Presiding Bishop Browning resolved to name a joint committee to write and monitor a new covenant for these sister churches. The Committee met for the first time in Sao Paulo, Brazil in May of 1991. In July of that year, the General Convention of ECUSA approved the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Presiding Bishop and the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church in the United States be urged to work with the churches in Brazil to support structural changes which will fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ in alleviating the poverty of people;

The Brazil-US Committee met again in Cincinnati, Ohio in May 1992 and for a third time in New York, NY in November of 1992. Clearly it is time to define a formal relationship of mutual support and affirmation for these two churches.

PREAMBLE

We believe we are called by God the Holy Spirit to enter into a new relationship; therefore the Igreja Episcopal Anglicana do Brasil and the Episcopal Church USA agree to establish the following covenant.

We hope and trust that this covenant will achieve the following goals:

- It will bear fruit that celebrates the Kingdom of God in Brazil and in the United States.
- It will strengthen our bonds of friendship, love, and affection.
- It will deepen the faith of the People of God who make up these two churches.
- It will reflect vitality and encouragement to the wider Communion.

We envision the covenant as a bold, risk-taking venture, based on a more authentic view of both our churches. This covenant calls for a renewed commitment to our relationship with one another. We envision a mutual partnership where God's gifts are shared joyfully with each other. The exchange of faith and talents through volunteers and through other avenues is intended to strengthen both of our churches in the areas of education, service, and expansion of ministry.

RESOLUTIONS

1. This covenant is intended to offer mutual support of each other's ministries. We need to support each other in areas such as:
 - evangelization
 - Christian education
 - stewardship/Christian responsibility
 - ministry for and by women
 - ministry for and by young people
 - ministry for and by children
 - lay leadership training
 - clergy training
 - etc.
2. We are convinced that we need to enter into joint programs to exchange and share the richness of human resources in each of our churches, with the following goals:
 - to meet identified needs in both churches in areas of education, service and expansion of ministry.
 - to strengthen the work already in place in both churches.
 - to reduce the sense of isolation from one another that we have felt.
3. We commit ourselves to share our lives in ways that will deepen our spirituality through mutual prayer, intercession, and witness.
4. We are convinced that we need to stimulate an increase in the companion diocese network between the US and Brazil so that each diocese in Brazil has a companion diocese in the US. We understand that it will be the responsibility of the bilateral committee to coordinate this task.
5. We must establish a substantial Mission Fund to be used primarily for the expansion of Episcopal Church ministry throughout Brazil. Grants from this Mission Fund are intended to be challenge grants, with no less than 20% of the funding being provided by the Brazilian Church.

We feel God's abundant grace working through us in this undertaking, and we enter this covenant with great thankfulness that God has called us from isolation and misunderstanding into a new relationship of mutual support and responsibility.