Don’t walk in front of me … I might not follow.

Don’t walk behind me … I might not lead.

Please walk beside me … and be a friend.

A RESOLUTION FROM LAMBETH

The Lambeth Conference declared in 1998 that “the time has come for significant new initiatives in encouraging all dioceses to develop companion relationships across provincial boundaries, as part of the process of developing the cross-cultural nature of the Communion.” The bishops resolved that by the next Conference, every diocese should have made “a serious effort to identify one or more dioceses as a companion, in formal and informal ways.”

For more information, write or call:

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Or visit the Companion Diocese web pages on the Partnerships Center website:
www.episcopalchurch.org/companion
What is a companion diocese?

One that has entered into a mission partnership with another, elsewhere in the Anglican Communion...

The Companion Diocese Program is one of the longest running success stories in The Episcopal Church. First formed in 1968 as a way to strengthen ties between Episcopal and Anglican dioceses throughout the world, the program continues to grow with often astonishing results. Frequently we learn and benefit more from our sisters and brothers in other parts of the world than we are able to offer in return.

Companionship benefits the partners in many ways. It stimulates enthusiasm for ministry and sharing within the linked dioceses. Participating congregations and individuals learn first-hand about each other. They open new pathways to understanding, learn different languages of prayer, make new friends. They find that spiritual ties are more important and much more compelling than cultural differences.

Today, 80 per cent of the dioceses in our church have companion relationships with dioceses outside the U.S., and there are many other linkages throughout the Communion. In some cases, whole provinces are linked to one another, or there are three-way partnerships. The possibilities for spiritual growth and understanding around the globe are limitless.

Why have one?

The purpose of a companion relationship is:

• To help strengthen the Anglican Communion through the direct experience of interdependence across cultural and geographical boundaries within the Body of Christ; and
• To strengthen one another for mission by building a relationship in which each partner is both giver and receiver.

Here are some ways that companion diocese relationships are experienced:

• Visits by bishops, clergy and laity
• Youth, women, or clergy exchanges
• Vacation Bible schools
• A common prayer or intercessory calendar
• Training for ministry
• Cursillo and Happening
• Newsletter exchanges
• Parish-to-parish links
• Faithful communication
• Seminars and conferences
• Gifts of arts and crafts
• Learning histories
• Cultural events
• Work camps
• Medical teams
• Attendance at diocesan conventions
• Assistance in time of need

How to get started.

Consult with your bishop and others in your diocese who are interested in having an international relationship. Share ideas about what part of the world, or what sort of diocese, might be meaningful for you. Form an exploration committee to pursue the idea further. Are there informal links that might be strengthened? Or new links to be forged?

Contact The Episcopal Church’s Partnerships Center staff. The Grants and Covenants Officer maintains information about dioceses seeking companion relationships, and can provide detailed information about the rich diversity of the Anglican Communion. The "Guidelines for Companion Relationships” provides essential information about the program.

Ask for the name of the Companion Diocese Consultant assigned to your region. (There is one consultant for each of the nine provinces within our church.) This person will help you work through the process of entering into a formal relationship.