

STANDING COMMISSION ON ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS

Membership

The Rt. Rev. Philip Duncan, *Chair*, 2015
The Very Rev. Sam Candler, *Vice Chair**, 2015
Ms. Elizabeth Ring, *Vice Chair*, 2018
Mr. Matthew Hall, *Secretary*, 2015
The Rt. Rev. C. Franklin Brookhart, 2018
Mrs. Carrie Díaz-Littauer, 2018
The Very Rev. Peter Eaton, 2015
The Rev. T.J. Freeman, 2018
The Rt. Rev. Scott Hayashi, 2018
The Hon. Joanne O'Donnell, 2015
The Rev. Steven Smith*, 2015
Mr. C. Edward Vance III, 2015
The Rev. Canon Manoj Mathew Zacharia, 2018
The Rev. Brian Cole, *Executive Council Liaison*
The Rev. James Biegler, *Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Religious Officers (EDEIO) Liaison*
The Rev. Ernesto Medina,
President of the House of Deputies Representative
Mr. Richard Mammana, *Staff**
The Rev. Margaret Rose, *Staff*

*Changes in Membership**

Two changes in membership occurred throughout the triennium: Steven Smith replaced Sam Candler in August 2014, and Richard Mammana was added as a staff member in June 2014. Dean Candler served as vice chair prior to his departure and was succeeded in that role by Elizabeth Ring.

Representation at General Convention

Bishop Philip Duncan and Deputy Carrie Díaz-Littauer are authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to this report at General Convention.

Summary of Work

Mandate: “To recommend to the General Convention a comprehensive and coordinated policy and strategy on relations between this Church and other Churches, and this Church and other religions, and to make recommendations to General Convention concerning inter-Church cooperation and unity, and interreligious dialogue and action” [Canon I.1.2(n)(5)]. The Commission also nominates for appointment by the Presiding Bishop persons to serve on the governing bodies of ecumenical and interreligious organizations to which this Church belongs and to receive reports from these bodies, which are then presented to the Presiding Bishop and Executive Council.

The Ecumenical and Interreligious Deputy is part of the Global Partnerships Team and works closely with the Office of the Presiding Bishop. The Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations initiates and maintains ongoing work in ecumenical and interreligious relations, a record of which may be found on The Episcopal Church’s website.

Meetings

- November 12-15, 2012, St. Louis, Missouri
- March 20, 2013, teleconference
- May 22, 2013, teleconference
- June 17, 2013, teleconference
- August 13, 2013, teleconference
- August 26, 2013, teleconference
- November 14, 2013, teleconference
- January 27-30, 2014, Salt Lake City, Utah
- July 11, 2014, teleconference

Resolutions Referred by the 77th General Convention

2012-A035: COMMIT TO CONTINUED INTERRELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

The Commission charged the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (EDEIO) to promulgate the interreligious statement approved by the 76th General Convention and to gather information about interreligious practices happening within their respective dioceses. This was done beginning in November 2013 via a survey instrument in conjunction with Congregational Research personnel. A statistically significant number of dioceses responded, and the findings were as follows:

- More than half of all dioceses are engaged in some form of interfaith dialogue and/or ministry.
- Most of the interfaith dialogue and ministry is with Jews and Muslims.
- In many cases, the involvement with Jews and Muslims includes dialogue on topics of common interest, including religious matters, shared worship occasions, and participation in local and regional interfaith councils.

2012-A036: FURTHER DIALOGUE WITH ELCA

This resolution posed a challenge for the SCEIR, as it appeared to direct the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee to act. This would seem to be beyond General Convention's authority, since the coordinating committee has both Episcopal and Lutheran members. Thus, the SCEIR spoke with The Rt. Rev. Alan Scarfe, Episcopal co-chair of the coordinating committee, to ask him to raise the issues listed in A036 with the LECC, which he did. While there is no specific resolution to present to the 77th General Convention to answer all points raised, dialogue along these fronts continues.

2012-A037: APPROVE AND COMMEND GUIDELINES FOR ECUMENICAL SHARED MINISTRIES

The Commission commended the guidelines on ecumenical shared ministries passed by the 76th General Convention to bishops for implementation as appropriate within their dioceses. As successes in joint work continue, there will likely be need of additional guidelines to address new and diverse circumstances.

2012-A076: STRENGTHEN SMALL CONGREGATIONS

The SCEIR committed itself to keeping small congregations, as well as congregations in a variety of differing contexts, in mind throughout its work. The Commission also notes and gives thanks that it is often within small congregations that some of the most creative and helpful ecumenical models continue to arise.

2012-B019: ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE AND SUPPORT OF THE DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

At its opening meeting, the Commission discussed the interreligious aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the relative benefits of divestment and positive investment, and the study document "Land of Promise?". Still, the primary thrust of this particular resolution fell under the aegis of the Standing

Commission on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns, so SCEIR also conversed about how it might be able to coordinate efforts with that Commission. Additionally, as the resolution requested, the Presiding Bishop will lead an interfaith pilgrimage comprised of Episcopalians, Jews, and Muslims to the Diocese of Jerusalem in January 2015.

2012-Do81: DIALOGUE WITH THE LDS CHURCH

The SCEIR met in January 2014 in Salt Lake City and was given the opportunity to receive generous hospitality from and have face-to-face conversations with members of the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This fruitful meeting helped to set the stage for the time that Episcopalians will share with LDS volunteers throughout General Convention 2015. Also, building on our time together, SCEIR has prepared educational resources about the LDS to assist General Convention attendees. Still, at this time, the SCEIR has no plan to recommend beginning formal bilateral dialogue with the LDS Church.

Status of Ongoing Dialogues and Full Communion Relationships

METHODIST-EPISCOPAL DIALOGUE

Although early in the triennium there had been high hopes to have a United Methodist-Episcopal full communion agreement to present to General Convention 2015, such an agreement has not yet been reached. A task force has focused on drafting such an agreement to engage the fullest possible participation of the historic African-American Methodist churches. While further work is needed to achieve full communion, the interim Eucharistic sharing agreement adopted by General Convention in 2006, and the 2010 document “A Theological Foundation for Full Communion,” continue to provide direction toward full communion.

More recently, the book, *That They May Be One?: The Episcopal-United Methodist Dialogue* by dialogue co-chairs Frank Brookhart and Gregory Palmer have further contributed to the conversation. The SCEIR is hopeful that a full communion agreement will be ready to present to General Convention in 2018.

PRESBYTERIAN-EPISCOPAL DIALOGUE

Dialogue between The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church (USA) has continued throughout the triennium. Discussions around expressions of ministry — the question of personal episcopate versus corporate episcopate in particular — have not yielded agreement, but have helped to clarify the differences between our two churches. Further conversations may move us toward some sort of bilateral agreement on the interchangeability of ministers, which would be useful to CUIC as it seeks out a multilateral interchangeability agreement. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize and celebrate the unique gifts that the PCUSA can continue to share with The Episcopal Church.

CHURCH OF SWEDEN-EPISCOPAL ENGAGEMENT

We give thanks for our many decades long partnership with the Church of Sweden. In recent years, that partnership has deepened with the sponsorship of a climate change seminar in 2013, with joint work with the Philippine Independent Church and the Old Catholic Union of Utrecht in a theological seminar on Globalism and Catholicity, and with conversations on mission-exchange possibilities. The two churches have participated in significant church life events, notably the recent installation of Archbishop Antje Jackelyn in June 2014. During the Triennium, theological background documents have been prepared as we continue and deepen our relations and full partnership.

OLD CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF THE UNION OF UTRECHT

The full communion relationship that The Episcopal Church shares with the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht — our oldest such relationship — continues to thrive. The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer remains the representative of The Episcopal Church to the Old Catholic International Bishops’ Conference. Two sources of confusion remain on this front. First, there are concerns about overlapping jurisdictions, as

the Church of England, the Old Catholic Church, and The Episcopal Church all have congregations within the same geographic areas.

Second, the Polish National Catholic Church was removed from the Union of Utrecht in 2004, so there are presently no Old Catholic Churches in the United States. Given our long-standing, full-communion partnership, the Archbishop of Utrecht therefore acknowledges The Episcopal Church as the expression of Old Catholicism in the United States, and so there are no self-described “Old Catholic Churches” in the United States with whom The Episcopal Church is in communion.

Ongoing General Convention Mandates

CHURCHES UNITING IN CHRIST

Along with eight fellow churches, The Episcopal Church remains an active member of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), the successor to the Consultation on Church Union. This multilateral dialogue continues to work toward interchangeability of ministry among its members and to eliminate the scourge of racism as a barrier to unity.

ANGLICAN-ROMAN CATHOLIC DIALOGUE IN THE UNITED STATES

The Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue in the United States concluded its most recent round during the past triennium. During its meeting on February 24-25, 2014, the dialogue approved the statement entitled, “Ecclesiology and Moral Discernment: Seeking a Unified Moral Witness,” which used immigration and same-sex relations as case studies.

The SCEIR is deeply grateful to The Rt. Rev. John Bauerschmidt of The Episcopal Church and to The Rt. Rev. Ronald Herzog of the Roman Catholic Church for serving as co-chairs of ARCUSA leading up to the release of this document. The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission also continued its third round during this triennium, meeting in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from April 29, 2013 through May 7, 2013; and in Durban, South Africa from May 11, 2014 to May 20, 2014. This third round focuses on the Church as Communion, local and universal; and case studies will include labor, apartheid and slavery, and stem-cell research.

INTERNATIONAL ANGLICAN-ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

The International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue met twice during the past triennium — September 4-11, 2013 in Serbia and September 17-24, 2014 in Jerusalem. Continuing its focus on Christian anthropology, the Commission addressed questions about topics including marriage and the beginning and end of life. The Episcopal Church continues to lack formal representation on this body since being asked to leave in 2010, but the SCEIR is eagerly looking forward to the time when we once again participate fully.

PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENT CHURCH-EPISCOPAL CHURCH CONCORDAT COUNCIL

Since 1961, the Philippine Independent Church (PIC), also known as the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI), and The Episcopal Church have worked together under a concordat of full communion. Meetings during the current triennium have established common mission goals as well as theological dialogues. Ongoing conversation regarding the work of the IFI in the United States and partnerships in the Philippines, as well as participation of the Obispo Maximo in Episcopal Church meetings, continue to deepen the partnership.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The National Council of Churches is an ecumenical body of 37 communions representing Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, evangelical, historic African-American, and Living Peace churches. Its two current priorities are combating mass incarceration and the racial bias it carries, and working to foster interreligious peacemaking. The NCC also provides a vehicle by which The Episcopal Church engages in interreligious dialogue with Jewish and Muslim partners. Episcopalians have been deeply involved in the recent

restructuring of the National Council of Churches, particularly in the leadership of the Convening Tables and ongoing anti-racism work.

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The World Council of Churches is the most inclusive worldwide ecumenical body, composed of Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant Churches from more than 110 countries. This triennium saw the WCC's 10th Assembly (governing body) take place from October 30, 2013 to November 8, 2013 in Busan, South Korea with the theme of "God of life, lead us to justice and peace." Daily prayer, Bible study, and fellowship marked the Assembly, which also addressed topics including the politicization of religion, rights of religious minorities, reunification of the Korean peninsula, and just peace.

CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Church World Service is a cooperative ministry among Orthodox, mainline, and evangelical churches working together to address issues of hunger, poverty, and migration. The Episcopal Church partners with CWS, most particularly in its refugee-resettlement work; and supports local partnership efforts with CWS, notably in its CROP Walk to fight hunger.

CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TOGETHER IN THE USA

Christian Churches Together is the broadest ecumenical organization in the United States, with participants from the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox, mainline, evangelical, and Pentecostal branches of the Christian family. CCT has had three annual meetings this triennium focusing on immigration (2013), mass incarceration and its relationship to race (2014), and immigrant faith communities (2015).

LUTHERAN-EPISCOPAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

The Lutheran-Episcopal coordinating committee has continued to work during the previous triennium to draft a response to "Called to Common Mission," the full-communion agreement between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. General Convention resolution 2012-A036 correctly noted that there were still points of divergence, including the questions of lay presidency and the role of deacons in the Church, and the LECC has focused on these in its discussions. At this point, there is no specific resolution to put forward that would harmonize our two stances, but discussions continue.

The triennium has also yielded a new website listing a broad array of joint Lutheran-Episcopal congregations and an illuminating article from ELCA co-chair Mitzi Budde in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* entitled, "Are We There Yet?: The Task and Function of Full-Communion Coordinating Committees." Moving forward, the LECC will continue to focus on questions of synod/diocese partnerships at the judicatory level, theological education, youth and young adult ministry, campus ministry, advocacy, environmental policy, and a joint new bishops' school.

MORAVIAN-EPISCOPAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

In its first triennium, the Moravian-Episcopal coordinating committee has begun work on a document providing guidelines for the orderly exchange of ministers between the two Churches. One sticking point that is still being worked out is that there is no provision in the full-communion agreement for the orderly exchange of deacons. Given that The Episcopal Church is in full communion with both the ELCA and the Moravian Church, and that they are in full communion with one another, we are working to ensure that exchanges among the three Churches are each in line with the others. The SCEIR gives particular thanks for this newest full-communion partner and continues to hold them in our prayers.

EPISCOPAL DIOCESAN ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS OFFICERS NETWORK

The Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (EDEIO) network continues to be a great source of information and support for the SCEIR. We are deeply grateful for the work they do and are humbled by their ability to see God in our ecumenical and interreligious partners. This triennium, they have

been particular helpful in gathering information about interreligious practices requested by resolution 2012-A035. They have also served to represent The Episcopal Church at the National Workshop on Christian Unity in both 2013 and 2014.

INTERRELIGIOUS RELATIONS

Interreligious conversation and relationship remain key parts of the SCEIR's work. Much of this work is done through ecumenical bodies such as the National Council of Churches, which hosts both Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim dialogues. Additionally, Communion-wide bodies such as the Network for Interfaith Concerns continue to study Christian-Muslim relations on behalf of the Anglican Consultative Council, and to host such interreligious events as the Christian-Hindu conference it sponsored in October 2014. The interreligious statement endorsed by the 76th General Convention continues to serve as The Episcopal Church's starting point for these conversations, and this statement has been broadly disseminated and studied during the triennium. Beyond these formal dialogues, Episcopalians have also been strongly engaged with other interreligious organizations, such as Religions for Peace.

Goals and Objectives of Recommended Future Work

The SCEIR would like to see a formal statement noting our historic partnership with the Church of Sweden, and another ushering in full communion with the United Methodists. The Commission has indicated a need for greater transparency, accountability, and communication with regard to dialogues, coordinating committees, and ecumenical bodies, including public notice of representatives, meetings, and reports of accomplishments.

Finally, attention should be paid to the variety of ecumenical and interreligious work that is already being done on a local level, since these laboratories of relationship will help to spur larger, church-wide initiatives in this direction. Empowering local ecumenical and interreligious officers will greatly enhance this work.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

A070: MAKE APPOINTMENTS TO DIALOGUES AND COORDINATING COMMITTEES

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 78th General Convention direct the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies jointly to appoint representatives to official ecumenical dialogues and coordinating committees of full-communion partners.

EXPLANATION

At present, only the Office of the Presiding Bishop appoints representatives to serve on ecumenical dialogues. Because the various dialogues are authorized by action of the General Convention, the method used to appoint representatives should be consistent with the method used with all other appointments: joint appointment by both Presiding Officers.

A071: ALLOW TRANSFER OF CLERGY BETWEEN ANGLICAN PROVINCES

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That the 78th General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons to present to the 79th General Convention appropriate changes to the Canons to allow clergy in good standing in The Episcopal Church to accept a call to another Province in the Anglican Communion in a manner consistent with Letters Dimissory.

EXPLANATION

The Episcopal Church welcomes clergy in good standing from other Provinces of the Anglican Communion who are called to ministry in The Episcopal Church through an established search and call process. Episcopal clergy in good standing are welcomed into other Provinces of the Anglican Communion when they are called to ministry in those Provinces through an established call process.

Recently, however, Episcopal clergy in good standing who accept calls into other Provinces of the Anglican Communion have been required to renounce their orders in The Episcopal Church. This is not a requirement that other Provinces in the Communion ask of their clergy in good standing. It penalizes our clergy in good standing and denies them the opportunity to accept calls into churches in other parts of the world and to return to ministry in The Episcopal Church. It also redefines our understanding of ordained ministry, since we claim to ordain deacons, priests, and bishops into the ministry of Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

Budget

In the 2013-2015 triennium, the Commission received a budget of \$16,000.00, of which \$9,559.48 was spent on the in-person meeting in Salt Lake City. Another \$779.15 was spent on Adobe Connect licensing fees, leaving a balance of \$5,661.37.

The SCEIR plans to meet approximately one time during the next triennium. This will require \$500.00 for 2016, \$10,000.00 for 2017, and \$500.00 for 2018, for a total of \$11,000.00 for the triennium.