

Reference Procedure

A Introduction

1. The Panel of Reference accepts that it is a Gospel imperative to seek reconciliation and to avoid fracture and breach of relationship. Parties considering a request for the help of the Panel through the Archbishop of Canterbury should first seek local mediation and reconciliation.
2. The Panel is itself, at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury, or of the Primate of the Province where the dispute is taking place, willing to facilitate mediation in the hope of reconciliation.
3. The Panel will work under conditions of strict confidentiality, and expect all who correspond with it to honour the same principle; documents submitted to the Panel will, of course, be subject to disclosure by the Panel for clarification and comment to all persons or bodies referred to in them.
4. The fact of the reference will be made public by a note on the Anglican Communion website.

B Process

5. On receipt of a referral from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chair will arrange for all members of the Panel to receive a short summary of the papers prepared by the secretariat, identifying the parties and the facts submitted to it. Any member of the Panel who is aware of a conflict of interest should at this point inform the secretariat and follow the directions of the Chair in the matter.
6. The Primate of the Province where the dispute is taking place will be advised by the Secretariat of the Panel that the Panel has received a referral and is processing it; the Chair of the Panel may at any time invite comments from the Primate on the matters referred to the Panel.
7. The submission shall be sent to the respondent(s) requiring a response within six weeks, which period can, at the discretion of the Chair, and for sufficient reason, be extended.
8. The Chair will appoint a sub-committee with two or more members of the Panel to act on its behalf. Normally, at least one shall be ordained and another lay.
9. All members of the Panel will be circulated with the full submission and the response as soon as the latter is received.

10. All members of the Panel will be asked to submit their responses (if any) to the nominated sub-committee and to all other Panel members and the Secretariat within fourteen days from receipt of these papers.
11. Where appropriate, and where finance allows, the sub-committee may arrange an early visit to the parties to a dispute in order to fulfil its role. The parties may be required to contribute to the cost of such a visit.
12. Whether or not such a visit takes place, the sub-committee may make such enquiries of the applicants, respondents and of any other person or body mentioned in the applicants' submissions, or the response, as it shall think fit to ensure that the information before the Panel is as full and accurate as possible; in particular the Panel shall not make any criticism of the conduct of any person without that person having been given full opportunity to correct allegations of fact or interpretation.
13. The sub-committee will produce a first draft report and recommendation for the Panel as a whole to consider.
14. Panel members will submit their own comments on the first draft to the nominated sub-committee within fourteen days.
15. The revised draft report and recommendations will be prepared by the nominated sub-committee and recirculated to all members of the Panel, who may contribute their comment on matters of substance but will otherwise indicate their assent. In the event of significant dissent the sub-committee shall discuss the matter with the dissenting members with a view to achieving consensus, shall report the outcome to the Chair, and shall follow his directions.
16. At this stage (before the report and recommendations are submitted to the Archbishop), the report, without any recommendations, will be sent to the parties for comment within fourteen days; their comments to be narrowly confined to issues of fact.
17. The final text of the report together with its recommendations shall be recirculated to the members of the Panel for the last time, and shall be signed by the Chair on behalf of the Panel unless any member dissents within seven days, in which case the Chair shall give further directions.
18. The Chair will submit the report and its recommendations to the Archbishop. The final version of the report, together with the recommendations to which the Archbishop has consented, will be circulated to the parties and to the Primate of the Church concerned.