

Two Traditions Serving Christ: Case Studies in How to Learn from Tradition, Minister with Relevance, and Engage Ecumenically

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A dialogue about how two strong, unique Christian denominations, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion (AME Zion) and the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), can draw on their traditions and learn from each other as they pursue effective ministry practices. The conversation is wide open to participants from any denomination, and will provide a model worksheet and process for asking these same questions in your own congregation or with others from different Christian traditions.

1. Vision

What makes this task a joyful opportunity is the vision of the church as the body of Christ. What we share in Christ is greater than what divides us. Even if institutional unity does not seem like a likely eventuality, Christ's prayer for unity suggests the rich prospects of fruitful, Christ-centered conversations and mutual learning.

2. Description

Find as many items, documents, and resources to compare as possible.

- Historical Documents
- Theological Themes
- Books and Resources
- Music and Hymnody
- Institutions, Magazines, Websites

At first, stick to simple description of these resources.

3. Analysis

Now, begin to ask more probing questions. Look for obvious similarities and differences, but then press on to probe surprising similarities and differences. As the momentum of conversation grows, don't hesitate to ask challenge questions of "why is that?" and "how did that come to be?"

4. Discovery

Name and celebrate moments in the conversation where you are challenged, inspired, humbled, grateful. Especially look for particular aspects of the gospel and Christian ministry that come clear through the comparison and encounter.

5. Dreams (Joel 2)

What dreams does each participant have for their own congregation or denomination based on this encounter?

6. Prayer

What particular reasons for prayer—both thanksgiving and petition—emerge from this conversation? "Pray for one another."