

The Church of England and the Methodist Church in Britain are to consider proposals that would bring them into a new relationship of full communion, after a period of some 200 years of formal separation.

The proposals are presented in Mission and Ministry in Covenant, a joint report from the two churches' faith and order bodies. It sets out how the Methodist Church could come to have bishops in the historic episcopate, and how ministers from one church could become eligible to serve in the other.

The report builds on the theological convergence established by 'An Anglican-Methodist Covenant', signed in 2003, and the subsequent work of the Covenant's Joint Implementation Commission.

In 2014 the General Synod of the Church of England and the Methodist Conference mandated the faith and order bodies to bring forward proposals that would enable the interchangeability of ministries in the two churches.

The report sets out a way by which the Methodist Church would become one of the churches with which the Church of England is officially in communion, alongside other members of the Anglican Communion and Lutheran churches in the Porvoo Communion.

The Bishop of Coventry, The Rt Revd Christopher Cocksworth, Chair of the Church of England's Faith and Order Commission, said: "I am grateful to the joint working group for their careful but imaginative work on bringing forward a workable plan for enabling interchangeability of presbyteral ministry in our two churches.

"The solution is built on the centrality of the historic episcopate and the bishop as minister of ordination.

"The scheme as proposed will enable dioceses, districts and local churches to engage in creative pastoral planning for the good of the mission of God in this country."

The Bishop of Fulham The Rt Revd Jonathan Baker, Anglican Co-Chair of the joint working group, said: "The separation between Anglicans and Methodists in Great Britain is a tear in the fabric of the Body of Christ.

"The proposals in this Report are offered as a means of helping to repair that tear.

"They maintain the catholic, episcopal ordering of the church while at the same time acknowledging the real and effective ministry exercised by ministers in the Methodist Church.

"I warmly commend them for prayerful reading in the churches."

The report has now been released with the aim of enabling a wider discussion in the Methodist Church and in the Church of England, and to allow consultation with other ecumenical partners.

[Download the full report: Mission and Ministry in Covenant](#)

