History of Christian Churches Together

Christian Churches Together in the USA began in September, 2001, with a meeting of church leaders in the US who explored the need for expanding fellowship, unity, and witness among the diverse expressions of Christian faith today. They lamented the absence of any one place where representatives of historic Protestant, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Evangelical, and Orthodox churches come together officially to strengthen their unity in Christ and empower their mission. They decided to convene another meeting in April, 2002 to continue this exploration and invite broader participation from other church leaders. At this meeting, held in Chicago, the vision of CCT was crafted and publicly announced. (The Chicago Statement is available upon request)

The next step was to agree on an organizational plan, including theological affirmations, purposes, categories of participation, a governing structure, and a proposed timeline. An expanded group of 55 denominational and other church leaders met at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena, California in January 2003, for this purpose. The Organizational Plan resulting from that meeting was approved by consensus by all who were there as “Participants.” This proposal and plan for Christian Churches Together in the USA was presented to the various denominations and organizations involved in the process. In 2006 in Atlanta, thirty-four churches and organizations adopted the By-Laws and officially organized as CCT.

History Phase I

27 church leaders consider the state of U.S.A. Christian churches
(Baltimore — September 2001)

- Made a specific commitment to explore forming an “expanded table” of relationships, fellowship, and witness.
- Lamented the absence of any one place where the wide diversity of Christian churches can officially come together to strengthen their unity in Christ and empower their mission.
- Determined that there is a need to expand and broaden fellowship, unity, and witness among the diverse expressions of Christian faith.
- Scheduled another meeting with expanded participation.
- Appointed an interim Steering Committee.

36 church leaders cast a vision for Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.
(Chicago — April 2002)

- Affirmed that broadened participation from other church leaders is necessary.
- Affirmed a longing for expanded Christian conversation, unity, and empowered mission.
- Provision name: Christian Churches Together in the U.S.A.
• Cast a vision for CCT and outlined the elements of a new relationship among churches.
• Determined that decision-making will be by consensus.
• Scheduled another meeting with expanded participation.
• Issued a public announcement.
• Appointed and interim Steering Committee.

Steering Committee prepares Draft CCT Organizational Plan
(June — December 2002)

• Actively sought to broaden and expand participation of church leaders in CCT.
• Prepared a draft proposal for CCT Organizational Plan.
• Planned January 2003 CCT meeting.
• Researched funding.

History Phase 2

57 church leaders consider, modify, and adopt CCT Organization Plan
(Pasadena — January 2003)

• Achieved broader participation from church leaders; continually increasing broad participation remains a priority.
• Reviewed, modified, rewrote, and approved, by consensus, CCT Organizational Plan.
  — Expanded CCT to include Christian organizations that are national in scope.
  — Affirmed criteria for launching CCT as 25 denominations that agree to join CCT
• Authorized circulation of CCT Organizational Plan.
• Identified interim budget.
• Scheduled another meeting with expanded participation.
• Issued a public announcement.
• Appointed an expanded Steering Committee.

Steering Committee initiates provisional CCT organizational infrastructure
(March — December 2003)

• Actively continued to broaden participation of church leaders.
• Developed CCT website.
• Researched incorporating as a 501(c)3 organization.
• Wrote grant proposals for funding.
• Monitored denominational approval process for CCT Organizational Plan.
• Planned January 2004 CCT meeting.
51 leaders evaluated progress of over 25 churches in process of joining CCT and adopting its Organizational Plan
(Houston — January 2004)

- Achieved broader participation from church/communion leaders; continually increasing broad participation remains a priority.
- Refined CCT Organizational Plan.
- Identified critical “next step” organizational development tasks and issues.
- Formed By-laws Sub-committee.
- Formed Outreach Sub-Committees.
- “Practiced” CCT’s purpose through worship, prayer, learning about different prayer traditions, and considering “the changing face of global Christianity.”
- Deepened working and personal relationships.
- Scheduled CCT “launch” meeting for 2005.
- Expanded Steering Committee.
- Issued public announcement.

History Phase 3

Steering Committee finalizes proposed CCT organizational structure and initiates plans for official organizing meeting and CCT launch worship celebration
(February 2004 — June 2005)

- Actively continued to broaden participation of church leaders through the Historic Black, Evangelical, and Pentecostal Outreach Committees.
- Prepared proposed:
  — Articles of incorporation
  — CCT Bylaws
  — Dues structure
  — Governance structure
  — Staffing plan
  — Job descriptions and compensation packages
  — Budget forecast
  — Fundraising plan
- Monitored approval processes of churches / Christian organizations joining CCT.
- Planned June 2005 Los Altos, California, CCT organizing meeting.

CCT Organizing meeting (Scheduled for June 1-3, 2005, at Jesuit Retreat Center, Los Altos, California)