

Official Text: Finding Our Delight in the Lord

**Finding Our Delight in the Lord:
A Proposal for Full Communion
Between
The Episcopal Church;
the Moravian Church–Northern Province; and
the Moravian Church–Southern Province**

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I. *Preface*

Preaching at the opening service of the Second World Conference of Faith and Order in 1937, William Temple (then Archbishop of York and later Archbishop of Canterbury) noted two “great evils” caused by the divisions of the church:

The first is that [the divisions] obscure our witness to the one Gospel; the second is that through the division each party to it loses some spiritual treasure, and none perfectly represents the balance of truth, so that this balance of truth is not presented to the world at all.¹

It is because of these two “great evils” of Christian disunity that our churches—The Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern Provinces)—have pursued a formal dialogue resulting in this proposal for full communion, a necessary step toward “the goal of visible unity in one faith and one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and common life in Christ.”² We seek this relationship of full communion so that our mission as Christ’s church will be more effectively fulfilled and each of our communions might be more complete because of the spiritual treasures of the other; and we do this for the sake of the world, “so that the world may believe.”³

We have also been motivated by the ecumenical history and legacy of our two churches. For Moravians, ecumenical commitment is rooted in the vision of Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, bishop and theologian of the renewed *Unitas Fratrum*. In the spirit of Count

¹ William Temple, “Sermon at the Opening Service” in Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope, (eds.) *The Ecumenical Movement: An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 18.

² *Toward a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches*, 3.10, www.coe.org/wcc/who/cuv-e.html.

³ John 17:20–21: “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (NRSV)

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Zinzendorf's ecumenical commitment, "The Ground of the Unity," endorsed and accepted by all the provinces of the Moravian Church, states that "through the grace of Christ the different denominations have received many gifts and that the Church of Christ may be enriched by these many and varied contributions. It is our desire that we may learn from one another and rejoice together in the riches of the love of Christ and the manifold wisdom of God. We welcome every step that brings us nearer the goal of unity in Him."⁴ The Episcopal Church's ecumenical commitment is expressed through the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (endorsed by numerous General Conventions of The Episcopal Church and Lambeth Conferences of Bishops), which commits The Episcopal Church to the search for the more visible unity of the church on the basis of what it considers the essentials of the Christian faith. It is the prayer of all who have participated in this dialogue that *Finding Our Delight in the Lord: A Proposal for Full Communion* may empower our churches to share their treasures with each other, strengthen their witness to the Gospel, and advance the unity and renewal of the church.

On the basis of this agreement, The Episcopal Church, the Northern Province of the Moravian Church, and the Southern Province of the Moravian Church agree that, in their respective General Convention and Provincial Synods, there shall be one vote to accept or reject, without amendment, the full set of agreements to follow. If adopted, each church agrees to make the legislative and any other necessary changes appropriate for full communion between the churches.

⁴ *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church) 2002*, "The Ground of the Unity," ¶6.

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II. *Introduction*

2. At their respective 2002 Synods the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church voted to enter into a relationship of Interim Eucharistic Sharing with The Episcopal Church. In August of 2003 the General Convention of The Episcopal Church passed an identical resolution. These actions inaugurated a relationship of Interim Eucharistic Sharing between the two churches. Building upon over two centuries of ecumenical dialogues between Anglicans and Moravians,⁵ the Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue, meeting from 1999–2003, and working from the Fetter Lane Declaration,⁶ came to consensus on the fundamental aspects of the Christian faith and recognized one another as belonging to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.⁷ Since 2003, the Moravian-Episcopal Dialogue has focused on the one remaining issue upon which consensus has not been reached: the ordained ministry. An interchangeable ministry is an essential element of each of our churches' understanding of full communion with another Christian denomination.⁸

⁵ For the background on Anglican-Moravian relations, see *Anglican-Moravian Conversations: The Fetter Lane Common Statement with Essays in Anglican and Moravian History* (London: Council for Christian Unity, 1996), 72–82.

⁶ From 1989–1995 the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland engaged in a dialogue which produced substantial theological agreement, as well as noted areas upon which consensus had not been reached. This dialogue summarized their work in *Anglican-Moravian Conversations*, and in the *Fetter Lane Declaration* the two churches “acknowledged one another’s churches as belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church” and committed “to share a common life and mission.” See *Anglican-Moravian Conversations*, 30–32.

⁷ See Resolution A087 of the 74th General Convention; Resolution 23 of the 2002 Southern Province Synod; First Partial Report, Committee on Ecumenical Affairs and Faith and Order, 2002 Northern Province Synod. See also “The Meaning of Full Communion for Moravians,” as approved by the 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern, Fifth and Final Partial Report, Mission with Our Ecumenical Partners, Resolution 11.

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3. The Moravian-Episcopal dialogue has set full communion, defined as follows, as the means to the greater unity to which our churches strive, and for which we believe our Lord prayed (John 17:20–22):

We understand full communion to be a living relationship between distinct churches in which they recognize each other as catholic⁹ and apostolic churches holding the essentials of the Christian faith, whereby the reconciliation, mutual availability, and interchangeability of ordained ministries is then fully possible. Full communion is not the same as organic union or merger. Rather, it is widely recognized as a significant expression of the full visible unity of all Christians, which we do not yet discern but for which we pray. Within this full communion, we understand that the churches are fully interdependent while remaining responsible for their own decisions. Full communion includes a commitment to establish, locally and nationally, recognized organs of regular consultation and communication in order to express and strengthen the fellowship and enable common witness, life, and service. Striving to end our divisions but to preserve our diversity, neither of our churches seeks to remake the other in its own image, and each seeks to be open to the gifts of the other as it seeks to be faithful to Christ and his mission.

⁸ See the Guidelines on Unity endorsed by the 1979 General Convention: “The visible unity we seek is one eucharistic fellowship....In this communion the churches will all recognize each other’s members and ministries....” See also *Called to Common Mission: A Lutheran Proposal for a Revision of the Concordat of Agreement* (hereafter *CCM*), ¶ 2; see also “Meaning of Full Communion for Moravians,” 2006 Northern Province Synod and 2002 Southern Province Synod.

⁹ Our two churches are catholic in the original sense of the word, meaning “universal.” The Episcopal Church understands itself to be catholic in that it “proclaims the whole Faith to all people, to the end of time” (*Book of Common Prayer*, hereafter *BCP*, 854). The Moravian Church likewise understands catholic to mean “universal” (*Moravian Book of Worship*, hereafter *MBW*, 3).

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Each church shall be open to the encouragement and admonition of the other church for the sake of the gospel.¹⁰

4. The two churches have also put forward their understandings of the basis upon which full communion is to be reached. For the Moravian Church in America, this understanding is found in “The Ground of the Unity,” and for The Episcopal Church in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral.

5. “The Ground of the Unity,” first adopted by the international synod of the Moravian Church in 1957, is a brief statement of the Moravian understanding of Christian faith and discipleship. Its ecclesiological paragraphs define the church as a unity, a fellowship, and a community of service. “The Ground of the Unity” affirms, first and foremost, that Christian unity is God-given and that our Savior is leading us to its ever deeper realization. Moravians recognize that “through the grace of Christ the different churches have received many gifts,”¹¹ all of them necessary for the upbuilding of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:15–17). The Moravian Church understands its particular calling to be the promotion of Christian unity among the denominations in the service of more effective mission. Moravians believe that, even though ecumenical engagement is “laid upon us as a charge,” unity cannot be achieved by human effort alone but is received as an unfolding promise from the Lord. In the words of “The Ground of the

¹⁰ See *CCM*, ¶ 2; “Meaning of Full Communion for Moravians,” as stated by the Southern Province at its 2002 Synod. See also the definition of full communion endorsed by the 2006 Synod of the Northern Province of the Moravian Church. Each of these statements may be found in the Appendix to this agreement.

¹¹ *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church) 2002*, “The Ground of the Unity,” (hereafter *COUF*) ¶6.

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Unity,” “We believe in and confess the unity of the Church, given in the one Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior. He died that he might unite the scattered children of God. As the living Lord and Shepherd, he is leading his flock toward such unity.... It is the Lord’s will that Christendom should give evidence of and seek unity in Him with zeal and love.”¹² “The *Unitas Fratrum* is committed to the unity of the children of God as a reality created by God in Jesus Christ.”¹³

6. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886, as endorsed and modified by the Lambeth Conference of 1888, is the foundation upon which The Episcopal Church seeks this relationship of full communion. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral has been endorsed by numerous General Conventions of The Episcopal Church and commended by several Lambeth Conferences of Bishops. There are four essential elements to the Quadrilateral as affirmed by the Lambeth Conference of 1888: 1) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the revealed Word of God; 2) The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian Faith; 3) The two Sacraments,—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord,—ministered with unfailing use of Christ’s words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him; 4) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church.¹⁴

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church) 2002*, “The Witness of the *Unitas Fratrum*,” ¶150.

¹⁴ *BCP*, 877–878.

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We see the Moravian Church and The Episcopal Church as being led together toward the unity our Lord enjoys for the sake of furthering Christ's mission. This agreement is a step towards fulfilling that promise.

7. The Episcopal Church and the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church commend "The Ground of the Unity" and the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral as the sources which inform our two churches' journey towards full communion. We seek not only to recognize our ministers, but to work together in the mission of God (*mission Dei*). We are striving to carry out this *mission dei* in a closer partnership. As a means of doing this, we also seek ways to allow for the interchangeability of our ordained ministries as well as ordained ministers.¹⁵

III. *Foundational Principles*

We now seek to state our agreement on how oversight is expressed in both of our churches and the ministry of bishops/historic episcopate, locally adapted.

8. We understand the ministry of oversight to be the way our churches delegate the good ordering of the church to representative bodies as well as to certain individuals called and

¹⁵ On this path towards a reconciled ministry, for Episcopalians this agreement affirms that the two churches are in complete agreement on the first three points of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral. In the respective Resolutions on Interim Eucharistic Sharing, each church declared that: "We recognize in one another the faith of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic, and undivided church as it is witnessed in the Moravian Church in America in the *Moravian Book of Worship*, 'The Ground of the Unity,' the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living*, and the *Books of Order* of the Northern and Southern Provinces and the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitution and Canons* of The Episcopal Church." In the same Resolution establishing Interim Eucharistic Sharing both churches also affirmed the doctrinal statement produced by the Church of England-Moravian Church dialogues, which may be found in the Appendices.

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commissioned to a ministry of oversight in a collegial fashion. In both of our churches, oversight is expressed conferentially and collegially through a variety of mutually complementary bodies.

9. Each of our churches is part of a global communion. Member churches of the Anglican Communion are autonomous provinces governed by representative synods which include clergy and laity.¹⁶ Individual provinces of the Unitas Fratrum are governed by representative synods which include clergy and laity, and are also part of a single, worldwide church governed by a Unity Synod which includes clergy and lay representative from the provinces.

10. In addition, between Provincial Synods and General Conventions, regular oversight of the church is provided by an elected, representative body or bodies which consist of clergy and laity. In the Northern and Southern Provinces, oversight is provided by a Provincial Elders' Conference (hereafter abbreviated PEC). In the Northern Province, the PEC is comprised of four clergy and four lay persons; in the Southern Province, three clergy and two lay persons. The PECs and the President of the PEC are elected by provincial synods.

11. In The Episcopal Church, between meetings of General Convention, oversight is provided by an Executive Council, the Presiding Bishop, and relevant Commissions, Committees, Agencies, and Boards. On the diocesan level, each diocese holds a diocesan

¹⁶ See the Preamble to the Constitution of The Episcopal Church: "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church (which name is hereby recognized as also designating the Church), is a constituent member of the Anglican Communion, a Fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted Dioceses, Provinces, and regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer."

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convention once a year for the purpose of managing its affairs. Each diocese also has a Standing Committee consisting of clergy and lay representation, elected at diocesan convention. The Standing Committee works in conjunction with the diocesan bishop in providing oversight for the diocese.

12. At the parish level, Episcopal congregations are governed by a rector and Vestry. The Vestry consists of lay members elected at an annual meeting and shares in the oversight of all aspects of congregational life with the rector. Most Moravian congregations have a Board of Elders, chaired by the pastor, which oversees the spiritual affairs of the congregation and a Board of Trustees which oversees and directs the financial affairs and cares for the church property.

13. Furthermore, each of our churches has bishops ordained in an historic succession. There are similarities in the way bishops function in our two churches: bishops ordain candidates for the ministry¹⁷ and have particular aspects of pastoral responsibility. There are also differences. In the Moravian Church, bishops are primarily pastoral and consultative. They do not function in administrative oversight by virtue of their episcopal office, but may be elected to an administrative office of oversight (such as the PEC). In The Episcopal Church and the Anglican tradition, bishops exercise pastoral and administrative oversight. We do not see these differences as mutually exclusive—rather as mutually complementary.

¹⁷ In the Moravian Church, bishops ordain candidates at the request of the PEC. In The Episcopal Church, the Standing Committee of the diocese must also approve ordinations of deacon and priests.

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14. Thus oversight in both of our churches is exercised in a confessional and collegial fashion, with clergy and laity sharing in the governance of the church at all levels, from the local to the provincial. In addition, all persons in our churches, lay and ordained, are called in baptism to engage in God's mission through ministry. The following paragraphs summarize our agreed understanding of the ministry of lay persons, deacons, presbyters, and bishops.

15. *Ordained Ministry and the Whole People of God.* All members of Christ's church are commissioned for ministry through baptism.¹⁸ Both churches understand the ministers of the church to be lay persons, bishops, presbyters/priests, and deacons.¹⁹ The ministry of the ordained is an expression of the ministry of the whole people of God and a response to the call and gifts of Christ who is Chief Elder of the Church and its ministry.²⁰ However, in order to further the mission and witness of the Church, God calls forth in the church particular ministries of persons to serve the people through proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments.²¹ Within the priesthood of the whole Church, the ministry of the ordained is an appointed means through which Christ makes his priesthood present and effective to his people.²² The threefold

¹⁸ *CCM*, ¶ 6; *MBW*, 165; *Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion* (the ELCA-Moravian full communion agreement), ¶38; see also *COUF*, ¶682.

¹⁹ "An Outline of the Faith, Commonly Called the Catechism," *BCP*, 855.

²⁰ *COUF*, ¶ 682

²¹ *The COCU Consensus: In Quest of a Church of Christ Uniting* (hereafter *Consensus*), Chapter 7, ¶30, which is a paraphrase of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (hereafter *BEM*), ¶M13 and its commentary.

²² *The Fetter Lane Common Statement: Towards Visible Unity between the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland* (hereafter *Fetter Lane*), ¶ 29, as found in

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pattern of deacon, presbyter, and bishop has been in existence since the first century.²³ The threefold ministry is a gift from God for the nurture of God's people and for the proclamation, witness, and spread of the Gospel everywhere.²⁴ These differing forms of ministry complement one another and must be seen in relation to one another within the context of the ministry of the whole people of God.²⁵ Each of these ministries is expressed in personal, collegial, and communal manners. They are personal in that each is exercised by a person who has been baptized and ordained. They are collegial in that baptism and ordination alike associate the individual with others who share the same call. Each is communal in that each is rooted in the life of the worshiping and witnessing congregation and that ministry is exercised with the cooperation of the whole community.²⁶

16. *Ministry of lay persons.* Through Baptism, lay persons are called into the ministry of Jesus Christ and therefore at the same time into a relationship with other Christians.²⁷ They are

Anglican-Moravian Conversations: The Fetter Lane Common Statement with Essays in Anglican and Moravian History (London: Council for Christian Unity, 1996), 21.

²³ *BEM*, ¶M19.

²⁴ *BCP*, 510.

²⁵ *Consensus*, Chapter 7, ¶21; see also *BEM*, ¶¶M5–M6.

²⁶ *Consensus*, Chapter 7, ¶22.a–c; based on *BEM*, ¶M26. Both The Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces, have accepted and issued formal responses to *BEM*. The Episcopal Church has specifically commended it as a resource for ecumenical discussions (see Resolution A061 from the 1985 General Convention), and the Moravian Church–Northern Province, issued its formal endorsement of *BEM* in the 6th Partial Report of the Committee on Ecumenical Affairs and Faith and Order of the 1986 Provincial Synod. The 1986 Southern Province Synod affirmed the response to *BEM* given by the PEC of the Southern Province.

²⁷ *Consensus*, Chapter 7, ¶24.

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called to bear witness to Christ wherever they may be, and, according to the gifts given to them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world. They are to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.²⁸ Lay persons who are subsequently ordained continue to bear responsibility for the ministry common to all Christians to which they were called at Baptism.²⁹

17. *Ministry of deacons.* By struggling in Christ's name with the myriad needs of societies and persons, deacons exemplify the interdependence of worship and service in the Church's life.³⁰ Deacons are ordained to a ministry of service and servanthood.³¹ Deacons are to interpret to the church the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world through a special ministry of servanthood.³² The deacon is understood to be an icon of Christ's own servant ministry and to make Christ's redemptive love known, by word and example, in both the church and the world.³³

Both churches have retained the ancient practice of first ordaining as deacons those called to serve as presbyters. However we acknowledge that there are differences in how each church has chosen to interpret the diaconate In The Episcopal Church, deacons are ordained to a ministry of Word and Service. After a duration normally between six months to one year, those

²⁸ *BCP*, 855.

²⁹ *Consensus*, Chapter 7, ¶24.

³⁰ *BEM*, M31.

³¹ *Book of Order*, Moravian Church–Northern Province, ¶204 (f)

³² *BCP*, 543; *COUF*, ¶684.

³³ *BCP*, 543.

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persons called to the presbyterate are so ordained.³⁴ For the Moravian Church, the intention of the ordination rite is to ordain deacons to a ministry of word and sacrament.³⁵ One serves as a deacon for several years before being approved for consecration as a presbyter.³⁶ For both churches, this is considered a time of practical training for those also called to presbyteral ministry. In addition, The Episcopal Church ordains persons as deacons not called to presbyteral ministry. There is no equivalent to this in the Moravian Church.

18. *Ministry of presbyters/priests.* Presbyters serve as pastoral ministers of word and sacraments in a local eucharistic community.³⁷ Presbyters are called to work as pastors and teachers in a collegial fashion with other presbyters, with deacons, and with their bishops.³⁸ They also bear responsibility for other pastoral acts of the Church such as preparing persons for confirmation and marriage, declaring forgiveness of sin, and pronouncing God's blessing. Mission is a responsibility of all who share the ministry of Christ. In the context of this overall

³⁴ *Constitution and Canons, Together with the Rules of Order for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Otherwise Known as The Episcopal Church* (2006) (hereafter *Constitution and Canons*), Title III, Canon 9, Sec. 7.

³⁵ See the rite for the Ordination of a Deacon, Moravian Church, Supplemental Liturgies, S-2, S-4, and S-7. In the ancient *Unitas Fratrum*, deacons served primarily as assistants to the bishop and did not have sacramental functions. With the renewal of the church in 18th-century Germany, the influence of Count Zinzendorf and the state Lutheran Church led to the adaptation of the office of deacon to include sacramental functions.

³⁶ *COUF*, ¶868; Moravian Church–Southern Province, *Book of Order*, ¶802; Northern Province, *Book of Order*, ¶205 (a).

³⁷ *Fetter Lane*, ¶33; *BEM*, ¶M30; Moravian Church, Supplemental Liturgies, Consecration of a Presbyter, S-14.

³⁸ *BCP*, 531.

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mission of the church, presbyters, accordingly, are called to leadership in mission. As evangelists they proclaim the gospel, teach God's purposes, and share their personal faith. They bear witness to God's work in the world as well as in the Church. They lead the Church in calling persons to faith in Jesus Christ and in establishing congregations. As ministers of word and sacraments, they pioneer in new forms of mission. They enlist, renew, equip, and accompany God's People as they go out into the local community, the nation, and the world.³⁹ In addition, presbyters serve in a variety of specialized ministries where they exercise their pastoral ministry. These include hospital and military chaplains, service in denominational agencies and boards, and in other ecumenical settings.

19. *Ministry of bishops.* Bishops represent Christ and his Church; guard the faith, unity, and discipline of the whole Church; proclaim the Word of God; and act in Christ's name for the reconciliation of the world and the building up of the church; and ordain others to continue Christ's ministry.⁴⁰ They have pastoral responsibilities in the area to which they are called.⁴¹ They are to be the chief pastors in their area of oversight and have particular responsibilities in matters of faith and doctrine.⁴² Bishops in The Episcopal Church are elected by a diocese and exercise oversight of a specific area.⁴³ Bishops in the Moravian Church are also elected by

³⁹ The description of presbyters in this paragraph is drawn from *Consensus*, Chapter 7, ¶56. In addition, all the functions of presbyters described in this paragraph may be exercised by deacons in the Moravian Church.

⁴⁰ *BCP*, 855.

⁴¹ *BEM*, ¶M29.

⁴² *BCP*, 517; *COUF*, ¶688.

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representative assemblies of a specific geographic area, namely, a particular province as a whole, but are also available as bishops of the entire *Unitas Fratrum*.⁴⁴ Bishops exercise oversight in conjunction with lay persons, deacons, and presbyters. In The Episcopal Church, this is through Standing Committees, diocesan conventions, Vestries, and General Convention; and in the Moravian Church through the Provincial Elders' Conference, Provincial Synods, and congregational Boards of Elders. Bishops preside at the ordination (and consecration) of deacons and the ordination and consecration of presbyters,⁴⁵ and with other bishops participate in the consecration of new bishops.⁴⁶

IV. *Ministry of Bishops*

20. As a means to deepen our joint mission and witness, to allow for an interchangeability of ordained ministers, and as a symbol of overcoming the scandal of our division, we seek to reconcile our episcopal ministries. In the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum* the Moravian Church has recognized the office of bishop as representing “the vital unity of the church and the

⁴³ Diocesan and suffragan bishops are elected by dioceses which cover specific geographic areas. The House of Bishops collectively may elect bishops for certain specific areas of oversight, such as overseas missionary dioceses, and elects a bishop with jurisdiction over chaplains in federal institutions such as Veterans' Administration, the Armed Forces, and prison chaplains.

⁴⁴ Under certain circumstances the Unity Synod, the governing body of the worldwide Moravian Church, may elect bishops for individual provinces. See *COUF*, ¶ 260.

⁴⁵ In The Episcopal Church, the terms “ordain” and “consecrate” are used in reference to all three orders of ministry in the ordination rites. In the Moravian Church's ordination rites, ordination is used in reference to deacons, but only consecration is used with reference to presbyters and bishops.

⁴⁶ In The Episcopal Church, this number is at least three, following ancient practice established by the Canons of the Council of Nicaea. In the Moravian Church, this number is at least two; see *COUF*, ¶ 689.

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continuity of the church's ministry."⁴⁷ The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral outlines four elements of the "substantial deposit of Christian Faith and Order" considered integral to the visible unity of Christ's church. The fourth of these is the "Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church."⁴⁸

We jointly affirm the following understandings of the office of bishop as locally adapted by our churches:

21. We affirm that a component of the ministry of bishops is the exercise of oversight in conjunction with clergy and lay persons, as described in paragraphs 8–14 and 19 above. This nature and form of this oversight is exercised in different ways in our churches.

22. We affirm the value of the office of bishop as a sign, but not a guarantee, of the succession of the apostolic faith of the church as a whole.⁴⁹ We hold that the office of bishop is a visible and personal way of focusing the apostolicity of the whole Church.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *COUF*, ¶687.

⁴⁸ *BCP*, 877.

⁴⁹ See *CCM*, ¶12; *BEM*, ¶M38; see also *COUF*, ¶687; see *Fetter Lane*, ¶¶42–45.

⁵⁰ *Porvoo Common Statement*, ¶46. The Porvoo Statement established full, visible unity between the Church of England, Church of Ireland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the Church of Wales with the Church Sweden, the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Church of Norway, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland.

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23. We affirm that The Episcopal Church demonstrated its intent to maintain the office of bishop through the actions of state conventions, clergy associations, and the first General Conventions. Priests were elected by representative bodies to exercise ministries of oversight and to serve as chief pastors and missionaries in designated geographic areas. The Episcopal Church further demonstrated its intent to maintain the office of bishop when these individuals sought and received consecration through prayer and the laying-on of hands by bishops from the the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of England.

24. We affirm that the Moravian Church has also demonstrated its intent to maintain the office of bishop. To further the cause of the necessary reform of the Church, in 1467 the first members of the *Unitas Fratrum* elected persons from among themselves to receive episcopal consecration. It is not possible today to determine the source of this consecration, once attributed to a Waldensian bishop.⁵¹ We honor the Moravian Church's valiant actions to continue the succession in the office of bishop in the ancient *Unitas Fratrum* despite extensive persecution, and in the renewal of the office of bishop for the sake of the mission of church.

⁵¹ For a discussion of the *Unitas Fratrum*'s belief that they received their episcopate from a Waldensian elder, who in turn was understood as having preserved a "pure" succession dating from the pre-Constantinian Church, see Edwin Sawyer, "The Waldensian Influence on the Moravian Church," *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society*, Volume 25 (1988), 47–61. See also Thomas Ferguson, "The Moravian Episcopate and The Episcopal Church," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 71:4 (2002), 498–518; Colin Podmore, "The Moravian Episcopate and The Episcopal Church: A Personal Response," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 72:3 (2003), 351–384; Thomas Ferguson, "A Reply to Colin Podmore," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 72:3 (2003), 385–390.

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25. We affirm the intent of the Moravian Church to continue to ordain in this succession with the rebirth of the modern Moravian Church in 1722, after the near extermination of the ancient *Unitas Fratrum* in the aftermath of severe persecution following the Thirty Years' War. One of the last remaining bishops of the ancient *Unitas Fratrum* consecrated new bishops for the Moravian Church in order more effectively to carry out its newly begun work in the field of global missions.

26. The renewed Moravian Church received the episcopate as an inheritance from the ancient *Unitas Fratrum* although it regards the episcopate in the renewed Unity in a different way from that of the ancient Unity. Formerly, a bishop had a governmental and administrative function in the church. Today, however, this function is not linked to the episcopal office. Moravians, along with other Christians, hold to the understanding, common to both the ancient and renewed Unity, that Christ is head of the Church and pastoral oversight is exercised in responsibility to him. This has received particular emphasis since the action taken in 1741 to recognize Christ as Chief Elder of the Moravian Church.⁵² A bishop of the Moravian Church is consecrated to a special priestly, pastoral ministry in the name of and for the whole Unity. In the Moravian Church the

⁵² For several decades following the 1722 renewal, the Moravian Church did have a Chief Elder who exercised oversight over the whole *Unitas Fratrum*. However upon the resignation of Leonard Dober as Chief Elder in 1741, the Moravian Synod was unable to agree upon a successor. After prayer and discernment, the Moravian Church chose to recognize Christ alone as Chief Elder and this decision was affirmed by the lot which the Moravians often used in discerning the Savior's will in decision making. Thereafter no single individual would govern the Moravian Church, but all authority flowed from Christ, the Chief Elder. November 13, 1741, is kept as a festival on the liturgical calendar of the *Unitas Fratrum* as a celebration of the Chief Eldership of Christ.

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office of bishop represents the vital unity of the church and the continuity of the church's ministry.⁵³

27. We affirm the local adaptation of the ministry of bishops through the tremendous faithfulness that the Moravian Church has demonstrated in maintaining a succession of bishops which they had originally understood to be of apostolic origin.

28. We also affirm the local adaptation of the historic episcopate by The Episcopal Church. Bishops in The Episcopal Church are elected by representative bodies; they exercise oversight in conjunction with other bishops, clergy, and lay persons, function collegially in a House of Bishops which meets regularly, and elect a Presiding Bishop as Chief Pastor and Primate but with no jurisdictional authority. Though many of these elements have been adopted by other provinces of the Anglican Communion, at their origin they were innovative adaptations of the Anglican historic episcopate for the needs and concerns of the nascent Episcopal Church.

29. Our two churches are already exploring areas of common mission, worship, and witness on local, national, and global levels. We believe that sharing in ministry of bishops is one of several ways to deepen areas of joint mission and witness, and to facilitate more visible expressions of the unity to which we are called. Our two churches affirm that we understand that each church has locally adapted the historic episcopate for the sake of mission in each of our churches.

⁵³ *COUF*, ¶687.

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V. *Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries*

a) *Actions of Both Churches*

30. *Receiving the gifts of episcopal ministries.* Both churches pledge to receive the gifts of one another in regard to the ministry of bishops. The Episcopal Church therefore pledges to receive the gift of the Moravian Church's understanding that the bishop is consecrated to a special pastoral ministry in the area to which he or she exercises oversight. The Episcopal Church recognizes that the Moravian Church, through its emphasis on the bishop as being a pastor of pastors (*pastor pastorum*), has a special gift to offer in this relationship of full communion. We believe that this Moravian emphasis may well strengthen the historic association of the bishop as chief pastor in the Anglican tradition.⁵⁴ The Moravian Church in America acknowledges that The Episcopal Church has sought to maintain a succession of apostolic faith and historic episcopate which the Moravian Church has deemed important in the establishment and continuation of its own ministry. Both of our churches recognize that sharing in episcopal ministries is a sign of the greater unity of the church for which we all pray.

31. The Episcopal Church recognizes that bishops in the Moravian Church are consecrated to a special priestly, pastoral ministry. The Episcopal Church acknowledges that the understanding of the office of bishop in the Moravian Church in America falls within the parameters of the historic episcopate, locally adapted. The Moravian Church recognizes that Episcopal bishops are

⁵⁴ As expressed in *BCP*, 518, 855. For a description of the role of bishops in the Moravian Church, see *COUF*, ¶687: "A bishop has responsibility primarily for providing pastoral care to pastors and the Church."

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consecrated to a special ministry of oversight which includes pastoral oversight but also other additional elements which are exercised in the Moravian Church in different ways.⁵⁵

32. The pattern of sharing in the episcopal ministry will take the following form. At the inaugural celebration of this full communion agreement, there will be a liturgical ceremony. Members of the PECs of the Northern and Southern Province, the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, and the President of the House of Deputies of the General Convention, as representatives of bodies which provide oversight in our churches, will attend and divide the duties of presiding among them as appropriate. This celebration will involve lay persons, deacons, presbyters, and bishops, and will be planned by a joint liturgical commission appointed by the relevant decision-making bodies in both churches. This ceremony will include bishops in good standing of the Northern Province, the Southern Province, the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, Episcopal bishops drawn from dioceses with Moravian congregations located within them, and one bishop from each province of The Episcopal Church. Because both of our churches are in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, bishops of the ELCA, including the Presiding Bishop, will be invited and may participate as they are able. Bishops from other provinces of the Unitas Fratrum and Anglican Communion will be invited to participate in this ecumenical event as a sign of the relationship between The Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church as provinces of global communions.

⁵⁵ For example, by the Provincial Elders' Conferences which are elected boards of laity and clergy that administer each province of the Unitas Fratrum.

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As part of this ceremony, the two churches will reconcile episcopal ministries as a means to reconcile our ordained ministries. Each church will use liturgical symbols and actions appropriate in each communion.

i. At an appropriate time in the liturgy, Episcopal bishops will kneel before Moravian bishops. The Moravian bishops will lay hands on them and pray, “Eternal God, with thanksgiving we acknowledge the ministry these servants have already received and exercised, and we ask you through your Holy Spirit to bestow upon them the grace and authority as understood and required by this church for the exercise of the ministry of a bishop, for the sake of the unity of the church, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.” The Moravian bishops then will lay hands on the Episcopal bishops and pray the Aaronic blessing: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. In the name of Jesus, Amen.” The Episcopal bishops will then stand, and the Moravian bishops will offer them the right hand of fellowship. This liturgical symbol is distinct from the passing of the peace. In the tradition of the Moravian Church, clergy from other denominations are welcomed into ministerial fellowship through the Aaronic blessing and the right hand of fellowship. Through these actions, Episcopal bishops present will be understood to have been welcomed into fellowship with those who sustained a witness of unity and fidelity to the gospel since 1457 as the *Unitas Fratrum*.

ii. The Moravian bishops will kneel before the Episcopal bishops. The Episcopal bishops will lay hands on the Moravian bishops and pray, “Eternal God, with thanksgiving we

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acknowledge the ministry these servants have already received and exercised, and we ask you through your Holy Spirit to bestow upon them the grace and authority as understood and required by this church for the exercise of the ministry of a bishop, for the sake of the unity of the church, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. Amen.” They will then lay hands on the Moravian bishops and pray the Aaronic blessing: “The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. In the name of Jesus, Amen.” The peace will then be exchanged. Through these actions the Moravian bishops present will be understood to have been incorporated into the historic episcopate, as understood by The Episcopal Church, for the sake of full communion.

33. Following this inaugural ceremony, in order to provide for a visible expression of the unity our two churches have now received in full communion, and to strengthen mission and witness in areas of the Moravian Church where full communion will have the greatest impact:

In The Episcopal Church, at least one Moravian bishop will be present and participate in the laying-on of hands at the consecrations of bishops for Episcopal dioceses in the states of North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, areas with the greatest concentrations of both Moravians and Episcopalians.

In the Moravian Church. At all consecrations of Moravian bishops, at least one bishop of The Episcopal Church will be present and participate in the laying-on of hands.

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Bishops of the ELCA will also be invited as a sign of our mutual full communion relationship.

b) *Ministry of Presbyters: Actions of The Episcopal Church.*

34. In this present document, our two churches recognize one another as belonging to the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church and summarize our convergence on the apostolic faith. This document has summarized significant convergence on the understanding of the office of presbyter. To further empower the full communion that is coming into being by means of this agreement, The Episcopal Church now recognizes and affirms the ministries of presbyters in the Moravian Church as fully interchangeable. In The Episcopal Church, no persons are allowed to exercise the offices of bishop, priest, or deacon unless they have already received such ordination with the laying-on of hands by bishops who are themselves duly qualified to confer Holy Orders.⁵⁶ Following the inaugural liturgy of full communion, The Episcopal Church will consider bishops in the Moravian Church as bishops duly qualified to confer Holy Orders. The purpose of this action will be to permit the interchangeability and reciprocity of presbyters between the Moravian Church and The Episcopal Church, without any further ordination or reordination or supplemental ordination whatsoever, and will fulfill the provisions of the Preface to the Ordination Rites of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church*. All current ordained Moravian ministers in good standing as of the date of the full communion celebration will thus be considered clergy ordained by bishops in full communion with The Episcopal Church and thus eligible to minister in The Episcopal Church.

⁵⁶ BCP, 510.

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c) *Ministry of Presbyters: Actions of the Moravian Church in America.*

35. The Northern Province of Moravian Church and the Southern Province of the Moravian Church recognize the ministry of presbyters of The Episcopal Church as fully interchangeable. In practice, as a matter of its ecumenical ecclesiology, the Moravian Church already recognizes ordaining authorities of other communities as being duly qualified to ordain. Currently all ministers from other denominations who seek to be received into the Moravian Church are received as deacons. In order to allow for interchangeability of ministries, it pledges to request the international Unity Synod to amend ¶685 of the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum* and pledges subsequently to amend its own Books of Order to allow for presbyters of The Episcopal Church, should they seek to be received into the Moravian Church to minister permanently, to be received as presbyters following completion of the appropriate procedures.⁵⁷ This proposed change will not apply to those seeking occasional service, but only to those who seek to minister permanently in the Moravian Church.

36. *The ministry of deacons.* While acknowledging that there are differences in how our churches have applied the office of deacon, we do not see these differences as church dividing, nor do we intend to diminish the Moravian Church's understanding of the office of deacon as a minister of word and sacrament or The Episcopal Church's understanding of the deacon as ordained to a ministry of word and service. As acknowledged in paragraph 17, there are differences in how each church has chosen to interpret the diaconate. At this time, in the

⁵⁷ The Unity Synod is the governing body of the worldwide Unity of the Brethren. It meets once every seven years. The Unity Synod approves a Church Order for the Unitas Fratrum. Member provinces may not contradict this church order, thus the Northern and Southern Provinces must wait until the next Unity Synod in 2016 to amend its Books of Order.

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Moravian Church, deacons are ordained to a ministry of Word and Sacrament and in process towards consecration as a presbyter. In The Episcopal Church, deacons are ordained to a ministry of Word and Service and are either in formation process towards the presbyterate or are vocational. As we enter into full communion, we are learning from each other's approach to the diaconate, lifting up the Moravian emphasis on formation and the Episcopal emphasis on service. As deacons in both Churches are called for specific ministries in their tradition, and since there are no parallels to the vocational diaconate in the Moravian Church, deacons would not be interchangeable.

Interchangeability of Clergy

37. In this agreement, the two churches declare that each believes the other to hold all the essentials of the Christian faith although this does not require from either church acceptance of all doctrinal formulations of the other. Ordained ministers serving in time-certain or temporary capacities (for example as supply clergy) will be expected to undergo the appropriate procedures of that church always respecting the internal discipline of each church. For The Episcopal Church, such ministers will be expected to teach and act in a manner that is consistent with the doctrine, discipline, and worship of The Episcopal Church.⁵⁸ For the Moravian Church in America, such ministers will be expected to promise "obedience to the faith and order of the Moravian Church as formulated under Scripture and the Holy Spirit by our Synods and constituted authorities."⁵⁹ Ordained ministers from either church seeking long-term ministry with

⁵⁸ CCM, ¶22.

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primary responsibility in the other will be expected to apply for clergy transfer and to agree to the installation vow or declaration of conformity in the church to which she or he is applying to minister permanently.

Joint Commission

38. To assist in joint planning for mission, both churches authorize the establishment of a joint commission, fully accountable to the decision-making bodies of the two churches. Its purpose will be consultative, to facilitate mutual support and advice as well as common decision making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future. The joint commission will work with the appropriate boards, committees, commissions, and staff of the two churches concerning such ecumenical, doctrinal, pastoral, and liturgical matters as may arise, always subject to approval by the appropriate decision-making bodies of the two churches.

Wider Context

39. Both churches agree that the historic episcopate can be locally adapted and reformed in the service of the gospel. In this spirit they offer this Agreement and growth toward full communion for serious consideration among the other churches of the Reformed tradition and to the greater church. In addition, both the Moravian Church in America and The Episcopal Church are members of global communions, and they offer the fruits of this dialogue to other conversations

⁵⁹ Ordination of a Deacon, Supplemental Liturgies, S-5. A similar promise is part of the rites of Consecration of Presbyters.

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between Anglicans and Moravians worldwide, particularly to the Anglican Church of Canada and to the Canadian District of the Moravian Church in America,⁶⁰ and to other Moravian provinces where there are judicatories or provinces of The Episcopal Church, with the hope that they too will be able to subscribe to this full communion agreement. Each church promises to issue no official commentary on this text that has not been accepted by the joint commission as a legitimate interpretation thereof.

Existing Relationships

40. Each church agrees that the other church will continue to live in communion with all the churches with which the latter is now in communion. We are especially grateful that both our churches are already in full communion with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This agreement will mark the first time three different churches have entered into full communion with one another based on separate full communion documents. We welcome this as the occasion in which the church of the First (Hussite) Reformation and churches which arose from the second Reformation have reconciled themselves on the path towards the visible unity of the church. In addition, The Episcopal Church continues to be in communion with Provinces of the Anglican Communion, with the Old Catholic Churches of Europe, with the united churches of the Indian subcontinent, with the Mar Thoma Church, and with the Philippine Independent

⁶⁰ There are Moravian congregations in Canada which are structurally part of the Moravian Church in America–Northern Province. Thus passage of this Agreement would be effective for those congregations which are part of the Northern Province. Honduras, Alaska and the Eastern West Indies are separate provinces of the Unitas Fratrum while the dioceses of Alaska and the Virgin Islands are structurally part of The Episcopal Church.

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Church. The Moravian Church in America, Northern and Southern Provinces, continues to be a constituent member of the Unitas Fratrum. This agreement does not imply or inaugurate any automatic communion between the Moravian Church in America and those churches with whom The Episcopal Church is in full communion, including other provinces of the Anglican Communion, nor does this agreement imply or inaugurate any automatic full communion between The Episcopal Church and any other provinces of the Unitas Fratrum but does not preclude provinces of the Unitas Fratrum which overlap Episcopal dioceses from adopting this agreement.

Other Dialogues

41. Both churches agree that each will continue to engage in dialogue with other churches and traditions. Both of our churches are in dialogue with churches of the Reformed tradition, and we offer this Agreement in the spirit of fellowship to those dialogues. Both churches agree to take each other and this agreement into account at every stage in their dialogues with other churches and traditions. Where appropriate, both churches will seek to engage in joint dialogues. On the basis of this Agreement, both churches pledge that they will not enter into formal agreements with other churches and traditions without prior consultation with each other. At the same time both churches pledge that they will not impede the development of relationships and agreements with other churches and traditions with whom they have been in dialogue. Both of our churches have regularly consulted with our common full communion partner, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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Conclusion

42. We receive with thanksgiving the gift of unity which is already given in Christ.⁶¹ In the words of the Moravian hymn, we give thanks:

What brought us together, what joined our hearts?
The pardon which Jesus, our High Priest, imparts;
'tis this which cements the disciples of Christ,
who are into one by the Spirit baptized.

Is this our high calling, harmonious to dwell,
and thus in sweet concert Christ's praises to tell,
in peace and blessed union our moments to spend
and live in communion with Jesus our Friend?

O Yes, having found in the Lord our delight
he is our chief object by day and by night;
this knits us together, no longer we roam;
we all have one Father, and heav'n is our home.⁶²

43. Repeatedly Christians have echoed the scriptural confession that the unity of the church is both Christ's own work and his call to us. It is therefore our task as well as his gift. We must "make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3). We pray that we may rely upon, and willingly receive from one another, the gifts Christ gives through his Spirit "for building up the body of Christ" in love (Ephesians 4:16).

44. We do not know to what new, recovered, or continuing tasks of mission this agreement will lead our churches, but we give thanks to God for leading us to this point. We entrust ourselves to

⁶¹ See *COUF*, ¶ 6.

⁶² *MBW*, 675. Text by Ludolph Ernst Schlicht (1744), tune *Confession*. Alt. tune 1982 Hymnal *Lyons*, e.g., Hymn 636.

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that leading in the future, confident that our full communion will be a witness to the gift and goal already present in Christ, “so that God may be all in all” (1 Corinthians 15:28). Entering full communion and thus removing limitations through mutual recognition of faith, sacraments, and ministries will bring new opportunities and levels of shared evangelism, witness, and service. It is the gift of Christ that we are sent as he has been sent (John 17:17–26), that our unity will be received and perceived as we participate together in the mission of the Son in obedience to the Father through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Appendices

The Meaning Of Full Communion For Moravians

As adopted in the Fifth Partial and Final Report of the Mission with Our Ecumenical Partners Mission Team of the 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church—Northern Province, June 19, 2006.

Why We Pursue Full Communion

In pursuing full communion with another church, Moravians are remaining faithful to Christ's will for his church and to our Moravian heritage:

- On the night before he died, our Lord Jesus prayed "...that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me, and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17: 21 NRSV);
- "We believe in and confess the unity of the Church, given in the one Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior. He died that he might unite the scattered children of God. As the living Lord and Shepherd, he is leading his flock toward such unity.... It is the Lord's will that Christendom should give evidence of and seek unity in Him with zeal and love."⁶³ "The Unitas Fratrum is committed to the unity of the children of God as a reality created by God in Jesus Christ."⁶⁴

When we can remove any perceived barriers between ourselves and another church, we live out our affirmations about Christ's Church.

How We Pursue Full Communion

When we mutually affirm a relationship of full communion with another church:

- We recognize and value the gifts present in each other as part of the Body of Christ, and we will be mutually enriched by sharing those gifts with each other.
- We will cooperate in common ministries of evangelism, witness, and service.
- We mutually recognize and respect each other as part of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, which affirms its faith through the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.
- We mutually recognize each other's practice of the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself—Baptism and the Lord's Supper—thus allowing for joint worship, including the celebration of the Holy Communion, and for the transfer of membership between churches as within each church.
- We recognize the validity of the ministerial orders of the other church, allowing for the orderly interchange of ordained ministers subject to the regulations of church order and practice of each church.
- We commit ourselves to work toward removing all barriers between ourselves and those with whom we are in full communion. We acknowledge that current differences in structure, doctrine, liturgy, and positions on social and ethical issues may require each church to speak for itself at times. At the same time, being in full communion, we shall be open to the encouragement and admonition of the other church for the sake of the Gospel.

⁶³ *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*, "The Ground of the Unity," §6.

⁶⁴ *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*, "The Witness of the Unitas Fratrum," §150.

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The Meaning of Full Communion for Moravians

Report A from the Christian Unity and Ecumenical Witness Ministry Group to the 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church–Southern Province.

1. In pursuing full communion with another church, Moravians are remaining faithful to Christ's will for his church and to our Moravian heritage:
 - a. On the night before he died, our Lord Jesus prayed in his "High Priestly Prayer," that "they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee...that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John 17:21)
 - b. In *The Ground of the Unity*, Section 6, "We believe in and confess the unity of the Church, given in the one Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior. He died that He might unite the scattered children of God... It is the Lord's will that Christendom should give evidence of and seek unity in Him with zeal and love." And in Section 150 of the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*, "The Unitas Fratrum is committed to the unity of the children of God as a reality created by God in Jesus Christ."
 - c. When we can remove any perceived barriers between ourselves and another church, we live out our affirmations about Christ's Church.
2. When we mutually affirm a relationship of full communion with another church:
 - a. We mutually recognize and respect each other as part of the one holy, catholic and apostolic church, which affirms its faith through the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds of the church.
 - b. We mutually recognize each other's practice of the dominical sacraments, thus allowing for joint worship, eucharistic fellowship, and exchangeability of members.
 - c. We recognize the validity of the ministerial orders of the other church, allowing for the orderly exchange of ordained ministers subject to the regulations of church order and practice of each church.
 - d. We acknowledge our differences, recognizing the autonomy of each church regarding structure, doctrine, liturgy, and positions on social and ethical issues. At the same time, being in full communion, we shall be open to the encouragement and admonition of the other church for the sake of the Gospel.
 - e. We recognize and value the distinctive gifts present in each historic but separated part of the Body of Christ, thus believing we have contributions, which we can make to each other.
 - f. We will cooperate in common Christian mission through full communion in faith, life, and witness.

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Resolution Establishing Interim Eucharistic Sharing

Approved by the 2003 General Convention of The Episcopal Church

Resolved, the House of Deputies and the Synods of the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern Provinces) concurring, that the 74th General Convention meeting in Minneapolis, MN, July 30–August 8, 2003, authorize continuing dialogue with the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern Provinces) which may lead to a future proposal of Full Communion including interchangeability of clergy for ministry of Word and Sacrament. And be it further

Resolved, the House of Deputies and the synods of the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern Provinces) concurring, that the 74th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, meeting in Minneapolis, MN, July 30–August 8, 2003, establishes Interim Eucharistic Sharing between The Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church under the following guidelines:

1. Moravian Provincial Elders' Conferences and Episcopal diocesan authorities are hereby encouraged to authorize joint celebrations of the Eucharist.
2. An authorized liturgy of the host church must be used, with ordained ministers of both churches standing at the Communion Table for the Great Thanksgiving.
3. The Preacher may be from either church.

Explanation:

1. We welcome and rejoice in the substantial progress of the dialogue between The Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America (Northern and Southern Provinces), authorized in 1997 and meeting 1999–2002, and of the progress of the initial North Carolina Moravian-Episcopal dialogue, which met from 1994–1997. Similar progress has been made in other Moravian-Anglican dialogues, including the dialogue between the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland and the Church of England that resulted in the Fetter Lane Declaration of May 19, 1995. We share the hope of the *Fetter Lane Declaration*: “We look forward to the day when full communion in faith and life for the sake of our common mission is recognized by our churches.”
2. We acknowledge with thanksgiving the dialogue between the Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America which resulted in a full communion agreement in 1999 on the basis of the document *Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion*.
3. We recognize in one another the faith of the one, holy, catholic, apostolic, and undivided church as it is witnessed in the Moravian Church in America in the *Moravian Book of Worship*, the *Ground of the Unity*, the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living*, and the *Books of Order* of the Northern and Southern Provinces and the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitution and Canons* of The Episcopal Church.

In addition we concur with the points of agreement in the *Fetter Lane Common Statement*:

“a We accept the authority of and read the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Each church provides a lectionary, and in the course of the Church’s year appropriate Scriptures are read to mark the festivals and seasons.

“b We accept the Niceno-Constantinopolitan and Apostles’ Creeds and confess the basic trinitarian and christological dogmas to which these creeds testify. That is, we believe Jesus of Nazareth is true God and true Man, and that God is one God in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.¹⁷

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“c We celebrate the apostolic faith in worship, and centrally in liturgical worship, which is both a celebration of salvation through Christ and a significant factor in forming the *consensus fidelium* (the common mind of the faithful). We rejoice at the extent of ‘our common tradition of spirituality, liturgy, and sacramental life,’ which has given us similar forms of worship, common texts, hymns, canticles, and prayers. We are influenced by a common liturgical renewal. We also rejoice at the variety of expressions shown in different cultural settings.¹⁸

“d Baptism is both God’s gift and our human response to that gift in repentance and faith.¹⁹ It is a sign of God’s gracious activity in the life of the person baptized. Baptism with water in the name of the Triune God is the sacrament of union with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, initiating the one baptized into the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Baptism is related not only to a momentary experience, but to life-long growth into Christ.²⁰ Both our churches offer baptism to adults and infants and regard it as unrepeatable. Since we practise and value infant baptism, we also take seriously our catechetical task for the nurture of baptized children to mature commitment to Christ.²¹ The life of the Christian is necessarily one of continuing struggle yet also of continuing experience of grace.²² In both our traditions infant baptism is followed by a rite of confirmation, which includes invocation of the Triune God, renewal of the baptismal profession of faith and a prayer that through renewal of the grace of baptism the candidate may be strengthened now and for ever.²³

“e We believe that the celebration of the Eucharist (or the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion) is the feast of the new covenant instituted by Jesus Christ in which we set forth his life, death, and resurrection and look for his coming in glory. In the Eucharist the risen Christ gives his body and blood under the visible signs of bread and wine to the Christian community. ‘In the action of the Eucharist Christ is truly present to share his risen life with us and unite us with himself in his self-offering to the Father, the one full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice which he alone can offer and has offered once for all.’²⁴ In the Eucharist, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church experiences the love of God and the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ and proclaims his death and resurrection until he comes and brings his Kingdom to completion.²⁵

“f We believe and proclaim the gospel, that in his great love God, through Christ, redeems the world. We ‘share a common understanding of God’s justifying grace, i.e. that we are accounted righteous and are made righteous before God only by grace through faith because of the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and not on account of our works or merits. . . Both our traditions affirm that justification leads to “good works”; authentic faith issues in love’.²⁶

“g We share a common hope in the final consummation of the Kingdom of God, and believe that in this eschatological perspective we are called to work now for the furtherance of justice and peace. Our life in the world and in the Church is governed by the obligations of the Kingdom. ‘The Christian faith is that God has made peace through Jesus “by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1.20), so establishing the one valid centre for the unity of the whole human family.’²⁷

“h We believe that the Church is constituted and sustained by the Triune God through God’s saving action in word and sacraments, and is not the creation of individual believers. We believe that the Church is sent into the world as sign, instrument and foretaste of the Kingdom of God. But we also recognize that the Church, being at the same time a human organization, stands in constant need of reform and renewal.²⁸

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“i We believe that all members of the Church are called to participate in its apostolic mission. There are therefore various gifts of the Holy Spirit for the building up of the community and the fulfilment of its calling.²⁹ Within the community of the Church the ordained ministry exists to serve the ministry of the whole people of God. We hold the ordained ministry of word and sacrament to be a gift of God to his Church and therefore an office of divine institution.³⁰

“Both our churches have a threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter, and deacon and believe it to serve as an expression of the unity we seek and also a means of achieving it.³¹ Within this threefold ministry the bishop signifies and focuses the continuity and unity of the whole Church. Apostolic continuity and unity in both our churches is expressed in the consecration and ordination of bishops in succession. The ordination of other ministers in both our churches is always by a bishop, with the assent of the community of the Church.³² Integrally linked with the episcopal ordination is our common tradition that the bishop has a special pastoral care for the clergy as for the whole church.

“j A ministry of oversight (*episcopate*) is a gift of God to the Church. In both our Churches it is exercised in personal, collegial and communal ways. It is necessary in order to witness and safeguard the unity and apostolicity of the Church.³³ In both our traditions in the course of history the exact structure and distribution of oversight functions have varied.”

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We find this agreement sufficient to hereby establish a relationship of interim eucharistic sharing.

4. We encourage development of common life throughout the Moravian and Episcopal Churches by such means as the following:
 - a. Mutual prayer and mutual support, including covenants and agreements at all levels;
 - b. Common study of the Holy Scriptures, the histories and theological traditions of each church, and the material prepared by the dialogue;
 - c. Joint programs of worship, religious education, theological discussion, mission, evangelism, and social action;
 - d. Joint use of facilities.

5. This resolution and experience of Interim Eucharistic Sharing will be communicated at regular intervals to the other Moravian provinces, to other churches of the Anglican Communion throughout the world, to other churches with whom this Church is in full communion, as well as to the ecumenical dialogues in which Moravians and Anglicans are engaged, in order that consultation may be fostered, similar experiences encouraged elsewhere, and already existing relationships of full communion strengthened.

¹⁷ Cf. *Anglican Lutheran International Conversations: the Report of the Conversations 1970–1972, authorized by the Lambeth Conference and the Lutheran World Federation* (London, 1973) (*Pullach*), paras. 23–25.

¹⁸ Cf. *Helsinki*, para. 31; *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (WCC Faith and Order Paper No. 111, 1982) (*BEM*), *Baptism*, paras 17–23, *Eucharist* paras 27–33, *Ministry*, paras 41–44.

¹⁹ Cf. *BEM*, *Baptism*, para. 8.

²⁰ Cf. *BEM*, *Baptism*, para. 9.

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²¹ Conversations between the British and Irish Anglican Churches and the Nordic and Baltic Lutheran Churches, *The Porvoo Common Statement* (CCU Occasional Paper No. 3, 1993) (*Porvoo*), para 32(g).

²² Cf. *BEM, Baptism*, para. 9.

²³ Cf. *Porvoo*, para 32(g).

²⁴ *God's Reign and Our Unity*, para. 65.

²⁵ Cf. *BEM, Eucharist*, para. 1.

²⁶ *Helsinki*, para. 20; cf. paras 17–21.

²⁷ *God's Reign and Our Unity*, para. 18; cf. para 43 and *Pullach*, para. 59.

²⁸ Cf. para. 21 above.

²⁹ Cf. *BEM, Ministry*, para. 7.

³⁰ Cf. *Helsinki*, paras 32–43; *God's Reign and Our Unity*, paras. 91–97, *BEM, Ministry*, paras 4 and 12.

³¹ Cf. *BEM, Ministry*, para. 22.

³² Cf. 'The Office of Bishop in our Churches: Texts', appended to this Common Statement.