

A Moravian Commentary on *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*

Introduction

At its October, 2007 meeting the Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations of the Episcopal Church reviewed Draft 14 of *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*. The Standing Commission accepted the document and recommended it be forwarded for possible consideration to the 2009 General Convention. The Commission also requested that a process for consultation and communication be developed.

In the months following, the Provincial Elders' Conferences of the Northern Province and Southern Province of the Moravian Church met individually and each also approved Draft 14, agreeing to forward it to their respective Synods in 2010 for consideration. Both Provincial Elders' Conferences also requested that additional supplemental materials be produced to assist the churches in studying this proposal.

Both the Provincial Elders' Conferences and the Standing Commission had seen previous drafts and had the opportunity to provide feedback. In Moravian circles, a previous draft was also circulated among bishops of the Unity and selected consultants for comment. In addition, the Inter Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations (IASCER) has been regularly updated on the progress of this dialogue. Now that it has been received by the relevant bodies of oversight, a copy of this proposal will be forwarded to IASCER for discussion as well.

For the Episcopal Church, the Standing Commission decided at its October 2008 meeting to take the final steps forwarding this document to the 2009 General Convention. A process of consultation including the Episcopal Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers (EDEIO) network, House of Bishops' Theology Committee, and seminary faculties (among others) is underway.

While all this was going on, Draft 14 was edited to correct errors, augment footnotes, etc., resulting in the "official text" being submitted for consideration by the three churches.

In the Moravian Provinces, clergy and congregations will be encouraged again to develop relationships with their Episcopal counterparts, and pre-synod meetings will provide important venues for discussing the document.

Accordingly this commentary has been drafted to facilitate reception and discussion of *Finding Our Delight in the Lord*.

Commentary on *Finding Our Delight*

I. Preface

The Preface has two main goals. One goal is to set out the reasons for entering into this full communion relationship. At first this may seem obvious, but while we have the foundations on which we seek ecumenical relationships, the dialogue team felt that we needed to state the underlying reasons. The quotation from Archbishop Temple outlines these reasons: first, the fact that our divisions obscure our witness to the Gospel; and second, that because of our divisions we are not quite whole, and have been deprived of the spiritual gifts and treasures of others. These are principles which we feel cannot be restated enough, and are a call to our churches continually to acknowledge the scandals of our divisions.

The Preface also notes that full communion is not an end in itself (what philosophers might call an intrinsic good); rather, full communion is an instrumental good—we seek this relationship so that our mission may be fulfilled more effectively, and so that we might be more complete in drawing from the spiritual treasures of one another’s communions.

The second main goal of the Preface is to note the foundations of our ecumenical engagement. For Moravians, it is the ecumenical vision of Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf’s theology informed the confessional statement of the Moravian Church, *The Ground of the Unity*, which is an essential component to the Moravian Church’s ecumenical commitment. For Episcopalians, the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral¹ is foundational, laying out four preconditions for the kind of close ecumenical relationship envisioned in full communion: agreement on the nature and role of the Holy Scriptures; understanding both the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed as sufficient statements of the Christian faith; recognition of the two sacraments understood as instituted by Jesus (baptism and holy communion); and participating in the “historic episcopate, locally adapted...to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.”

II. Introduction

The Introduction begins by describing the series of steps both churches² have taken which lay the foundation for the current proposal for full communion. In 2002 and 2003, both churches passed identical resolutions stating that “they have come to consensus on the fundamental aspects of the Christian faith” and that they have “recognized each other as belonging to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” This consensus and recognition rest on over two centuries

¹ The text of the Quadrilateral is found in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1979), pp. 876–878. Note that there are two versions of the text—one adopted by the Episcopal House of Bishops in Chicago, 1886, and one adopted by the Lambeth Conference of 1888. (The Lambeth Conference is the once-every-ten-year gathering of all Anglican bishops from around the world at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury.) The dialogue team chose not to parse the nuanced differences between the two versions but rather to understand the four preconditions as indicating the general areas in which significant agreement must be identified.

² To simplify discussion, “both churches” is understood to mean both the Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church—Northern and Southern Provinces. While it is clear that each Moravian province is, within the bounds of *The Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*, self-governing and semi-autonomous (and therefore able to accept or reject the full communion proposal independently of the action of the other), for simplicity’s sake they will be treated as one church.

of ecumenical dialogue between Moravians and Anglicans, the work of the Episcopal–Moravian dialogue between 1999 and 2003, and the *Fetter Lane Declaration*.³

As a result of these agreements, the two churches entered into a relationship of interim Eucharistic sharing while continuing to work toward consensus on the remaining issue of the ordained ministry.⁴

¶3 of the Introduction offers a definition of full communion. This definition is taken from *Called to Common Mission* (the full communion agreement between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), with the final sentence (asking each church to “be open to the encouragement and admonition of the other”) drawn from the *Formula of Agreement* between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and churches of the Reformed tradition. Footnote 10 refers to “The Meaning of Full Communion for Moravians,” a statement endorsed by the 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province that rests on a text used in the Southern Province.⁵

The rest of the introductory section further explicates the foundational ecumenical stances of our churches first noted in the Preface. ¶5 focuses on *The Ground of the Unity*, a statement initially adopted by Unity Synod of 1957. *The Ground of the Unity* notes that Moravians believe ecumenical engagement is “laid on them as a charge”, and that unity is something given by God which we are called to realize. ¶6 outlines the four points of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral.

III. Foundational Principles

Section III begins the discussion of interchangeability of ministries, beginning first with presenting the ways in which oversight (*episcopé*) is expressed in both of our churches.

A. Oversight:

Beginning with ¶8, this section first discusses oversight in general and then moves on to describe how the ministry of oversight is exercised in each church. The discussion notes that a ministry of oversight is something which is exercised by the church as a whole, and that it is exercised by both individuals and representative bodies acting conferentially with one another.

The ministry of oversight is exercised at all levels in the church—internationally, nationally, regionally, and locally. In both churches, both clergy and laity have roles in this ministry of oversight. In addition, both churches have bishops ordained in an historic succession and who provide oversight to the church (see ¶13). However, the way in which that oversight is expressed is different.

In the Moravian Church, bishops exercise a ministry of oversight primarily in a pastoral and consultative way. They exercise administrative oversight only if also elected to a representative body such as the Provincial Elders’ Conference. In the Episcopal Church, bishops exercise administrative oversight by virtue of their episcopal office as well as pastoral and consultative

³ *The Fetter Lane Declaration*, issued May 19, 1995, is the concluding section of *The Fetter Lane Common Statement*, summarizing the results of the most recent dialogue between the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland and identifying the “next steps” toward the goal of “visible unity in as many areas of life and witness as possible.”

⁴ See, e.g., the First Partial Report of the Committee on Ecumenical Affairs/Faith and Order of the 2002 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province and Report A from the Christian Unity and Ecumenical Witness Ministry Group to the 2002 Provincial Synod of the Moravian Church–Southern Province. These reports, together with subsequent synod actions, are included in the appendix of this commentary.

⁵ See the appendix for the texts of the Northern and Southern Provinces’ understanding of full communion.

oversight. However, despite these differences in the office of bishop, there is significant convergence in how oversight is exercised in both churches.

Section III then discusses the orders of ministry in the two churches, covering the ministries of laypersons, deacons, presbyters, and bishops in ¶¶15–19. These paragraphs are drawn from similar language in *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*; *The Book of Common Prayer*; the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*; and the Fetter Lane Agreed Statement between the Church of England and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland. The only matter which the dialogue identified as warranting further discussion is the ministry of deacons; otherwise there is consensus on the understanding of the offices of ordained ministry.

B. Ministry of Deacons

Both churches have deacons, presbyters, and bishops. However, the Episcopal Church has employed this threefold ministry in a different fashion than the Moravian Church.

Episcopal deacons function much the way deacons functioned in the ancient *Unitas Fratrum* (1457–1722) and as deacons do in the broader catholic tradition: as ministers of Word and Service (or servanthood), under the direct commission of the bishop, and are not authorized to preside at the sacraments. Normally, they do not serve as pastors of congregations. Deacons who are called to become presbyters (priests) serve as deacons for six months to a year and are then ordained as presbyters—ministers of Word and Sacrament.

With the renewal of the Moravian Church in the 1700s, under heavy influence from the German Lutheran state church (with its emphasis on the one office of pastoral ministry), the Moravian office of deacon was adapted to include presiding at the sacraments. The ordination rite of the Moravian Church since that time clearly demonstrates the intent to ordain deacons to a sacramental ministry. Thus in the Moravian Church deacons celebrate communion, preside at baptism, and are pastors of congregations. ¶11 acknowledges these differences.⁶

Later in the document, in ¶36, this agreement states that should both churches enter into full communion, the ministry of deacons will not be interchangeable given these differences.

C. Ministries of Presbyters and Bishops

¶18 describes the ministry of presbyters (priests) in each church. While the language used is drawn from the Consultation on Church Union's (COCU) *Consensus* (which, in turn, uses language from *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*), it accurately reflects the role of both presbyters and deacons in the Moravian Church.

¶19 describes the ministry of bishops in each church, signaling both some significant similarities and some significant differences. These differences—and similarities—are taken up in the next section.

IV. Ministry of Bishops

It is important to remember that the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral lists the requirement of the historic episcopate, locally adapted, as necessary for entering into full communion with the Episcopal Church. Similarly, the *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum* speaks of the office of

⁶ The Episcopal Church also ordains persons as deacons who are not called to the ministry of presbyters, rather exercising a special ministry of servanthood under the direction of the bishop. There is no parallel office of ministry in the Moravian Church. While the office of acolyte has some similarities (see, e.g., *The Book of Order of the Moravian Church—Northern Province*, ¶209.b), note that acolytes are received (not ordained) and serve in a local congregation under the direction of the pastor or the Provincial Elders' Conference (and not the bishop).

bishop as representing “the vital unity of the church and the continuity of the church’s ministry.” Consequently, Section IV goes into greater detail on the two churches’ understanding of the historic episcopate in the context of full communion.

¶¶21–22 state the two churches’ agreement on the office of bishop. While the exercise of oversight differs in the two churches, both acknowledge that episcopal oversight is exercised “in conjunction with clergy and laypersons” and that the office of bishop serves as a sign of the unity of the church as a whole.

¶¶23–24 affirm the two churches’ intent to maintain the office of bishop. In the Episcopal Church, this intention is demonstrated by the adaptation of the office of bishop as received from the Church of England for the context of a disestablished church in the new American republic. For the Moravian Church, this intention is demonstrated by the choice in 1467 to select persons to receive episcopal consecration. While the source of this initial consecration is simply not possible to determine, the intention is further demonstrated through the valiant and faithful efforts of the Moravian Church to continue to ordain their bishops in a succession in the face of persistent persecution nearly to the point of extinction.

¶25 notes that the renewed Moravian Church (post-1722) demonstrated this intention through the consecrating of bishops from the last remaining Moravian bishop and by continuing to ordain its bishops in a historic succession up to the present day. ¶26 provides additional discussion of the way in which the office of bishop has been adapted by the Moravian Church, particularly noting the way in which Moravians hold to the notion that Christ is the only Head of the church.

¶¶28–28 conclude by noting that both churches have locally adapted the office of bishop for the sake of mission. Section V then moves to a discussion of how the two churches will share in that ministry of bishops.

V. Reconciliation of Ordained Ministries

This discussion is divided into four parts:

- a) actions of both churches;
- b) actions of the Episcopal Church to allow for interchangeable ministry of presbyters;
- c) actions of the Moravian Church to allow for interchangeable ministry of presbyters;
- and
- d) interchangeability of deacons

a) Actions of both churches

¶¶30–33 outline a process for reconciling the ministry of bishops in both churches, with each church making similar pledges, commitments, and acknowledgments.

In ¶30 each church pledges to seek to receive the gifts of episcopal ministry that the other offers. The Episcopal Church recognizes the special emphasis in the Moravian Church on the pastoral and consultative aspects of oversight that Moravian bishops exercise. The Moravian Church recognizes that the Episcopal Church has maintained a succession of apostolic faith and historic episcopate which the Moravian Church sees as important in the continuation of its own ministry.

In ¶31 the Episcopal Church acknowledges that Moravian bishops are within the parameters of the historic episcopate, locally adapted. The Moravian Church recognizes that Episcopal bishops are consecrated to ministries of oversight exercised in different ways in the Moravian Church.

¶32 outlines the process for reconciliation and recognition of episcopal ministries.⁷ A ceremony celebrating and inaugurating full communion will follow approval of this document, planned by an appropriate commission. This ceremony will involve representative ministers of oversight and members of those bodies which exercise oversight in the churches, as well as laypersons, deacons, presbyters, and bishops.

This ceremony will include bishops in good standing in the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church. From the Episcopal Church, the Presiding Bishop, bishops from dioceses with Moravian congregations, and at least one bishop from each of the nine provinces of the Episcopal Church will attend. As a sign of our mutual full communion relationship, bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, including its Presiding Bishop, will be invited. Likewise, since both churches are part of global communions, bishops from other provinces of the Moravian Church and the Anglican Communion will also be invited.

¶32.i. describes the process of reconciliation of episcopal ministries, which will include a *mutual* laying-on-of-hands, with the *same* words and *same* liturgical actions. Episcopal bishops will kneel before the 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 will then pray the following 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.

The concluding section of paragraph 27.i. describes the reasons for these actions and prayers. In the Moravian Church, clergy from other denominations are received into the ministry through the praying of the Aaronic blessing and the giving of the right hand of fellowship. The final sentence of this section states that “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*.” Thus the ministry of bishops in the Episcopal Church will be understood to have been accepted by the Moravian Church.

¶32.ii. continues this description of reconciliation of episcopal ministries. The Moravian bishops will then kneel before the Episcopal bishops, who 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

⁷ Generally, full communion includes the interchangeability of ministries for the sake of mission and witness. This involves recognizing the ministries of another church as authentic and removing any barriers that might inhibit interchangeability. Consequently, in **recognition** one church formally acknowledges the ministries of another church while **reconciliation** involves the removal of all restrictions to allow for service in one another’s churches.

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 Episcopal bishops will then pray the same blessing used by Moravian bishops:

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 peace will be exchanged, since the giving of the right hand of fellowship is not something that is part of the tradition of the Episcopal Church. In the Episcopal Church, clergy from other denominations may be received through laying on of hands by a bishop and with a prayer acknowledging the ministry that they have exercised and granting the authority to exercise that ministry as the Episcopal Church understands it. The prayer used in this ceremony is the one adapted from Title III, Canon 10.

The concluding sentence of ¶32.ii states that through these actions the Episcopal Church understands those Moravian bishops present to have been incorporated into the historic episcopate, for the sake of full communion.

Note that what is intended to happen in this service of worship inaugurating the full communion relationship is mutual: it is a mutual exchange of episcopal gifts using the same words and liturgical gestures, and it is done for the sake of full communion which, in turn, is done to enhance the mission and ministry of both churches.

¶33 describes the pattern for future sharing in episcopal ministries. Moravian bishops will be present at episcopal consecrations in those states with the greatest concentration of Moravian congregations. At all Moravian consecrations, there will be at least one Episcopal bishop present, as a sign of the relationship of full communion.

b) Ministry of Presbyters: Actions of the Episcopal Church

¶34 describes the process for reconciliation of the ministry of Moravian presbyters. Since Moravian bishops, by virtue of the exchange of episcopal gifts effected by the inauguration of full communion, will be considered duly qualified to ordain in Episcopal understanding, those presbyters they have ordained and consecrated will also be considered qualified to serve in their presbyteral capacity in the Episcopal Church.

c) Ministry of Presbyters: Actions of the Moravian Church

¶35 stipulates what the Northern and Southern Provinces pledge to do in order to provide for the reconciliation of the ministry of Episcopal presbyters. *The Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*, together with the Books of Order of each province, must be amended to allow for an Episcopal priest seeking to transfer permanently into the Moravian Church to be received as a Moravian presbyter. (Currently all clergy who transfer into the Moravian Church are received as deacons.) This process will begin with each province petitioning the Unity Synod of 2016 to amend *The Church Order*; when it has been amended, each province will then need to bring their own *Book of Order* into compliance with *The Church Order*.

d) Ministry of Deacons

¶36 (as noted earlier) states that the two churches have differences in how they understand the ministry of deacons, but that these differences need not be church dividing. Given these differences, however, there cannot be an interchangeability of deacons similar to that of presbyters.

VI. Interchangeability of Clergy

This section outlines the process for exchange of clergy, and is drawn from the language used in *Called to Common Mission*, the full communion agreement between the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. This process is similar to that used by the Moravian Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in their full communion relationship. In brief, the polity and standards of each church are to be followed and respected. In practical terms, if an Episcopal priest wishes to serve either temporarily or permanently in the Moravian Church, he or she must conform to the standards for ordained ministry of the Moravian Church.

VII. Joint Commission

¶38 stipulates how both churches will begin to “live into” this relationship of full communion. Together they will create a joint commission to oversee and assist in implementing the full communion proposal (as Moravians and Lutherans have done). In fact, given the common full communion relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, there has been some discussion about whether it would be appropriate to have a tripartite joint commission.

VIII. Wider Context

Both churches are in dialogue with churches of the Reformed tradition (the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and the United Church of Christ), and this proposal will be communicated to those conversations. Likewise, as noted above, the proposal will also be submitted to the appropriate international bodies of our churches as part of broader process of consultation.

In addition, both churches overlap with different provinces of the other. For instance, the Moravian congregations in Canada are part of the United States Northern Province. Similarly, Alaska and the Virgin Islands are dioceses of the Episcopal Church but are separate provinces of the Moravian Church. This proposal will be circulated to those areas where our churches overlap with the hope that those provinces will participate in this agreement. A similar dynamic has informed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America–Moravian full communion relationship.

IX. Existing Relationships

This proposal would mark the first time three churches (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Episcopal Church, Moravian Church) have entered into full communion on the basis of separately negotiated agreements. We welcome this development and have been exploring ways in which we might live into this common relationship.

With regards to other existing relationships, it is important to note that this proposal is between the Episcopal Church and the Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church. It does not initiate or inaugurate full communion or clergy interchangeability between other provinces of Anglican Communion or the Moravian Church, although this agreement will be circulated in the hopes that others would also agree to it.

X. Other Dialogues

Both churches will continue with ecumenical conversations and partnerships, while being in consultation with one another.

XI. Conclusion

Given the musical tradition of the Moravian Church that expresses its distinctive liturgical and theological ethos, the dialogue team chose to close its proposal for full communion with a Moravian hymn acknowledging that the unity we seek to express in full communion lies in Christ Jesus:

O yes, having found in the Lord our delight,
he is our chief object by day or by night;
this knits us together, no longer we roam;
we all have one Father, and heav'n is our home.⁸

⁸ *Moravian Book of Worship*, 675.

Appendix

FIRST PARTIAL REPORT
THE COMMITTEE ON ECUMENICAL AFFAIRS / FAITH
AND ORDER

Re: Establishing continuing dialogue and interim eucharistic sharing with the Episcopal Church

Whereas, 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, meeting 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.” And

Whereas, 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*; and

Whereas, We recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic faith of the 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 in the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Constitutions 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

“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

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.

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

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.

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.

“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

“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.

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.

“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.”

We find this teaching sufficiently compatible to hereby establish a relationship of interim eucharistic sharing.

Be it therefore

Resolved: (1) the Synod of the Moravian Church–Southern Province and the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church concurring, the Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province authorize continuing dialogue with the Episcopal Church 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: (2) the Synod of the Moravian Church–Southern Province and the 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church concurring, the Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province establish interim eucharistic sharing between the Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America under the following guidelines:

- a. Moravian Provincial Elders’ Conferences and Episcopal diocesan authorities must authorize joint celebrations of the Eucharist.
- b. An authorized liturgy of the host church must be used, with ordained ministers of both churches standing at the Communion Table for the Prayer of Thanksgiving.
- c. The preacher may be from either church.

And be it further

Resolved: (3) 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.

And be it further

Resolved: (4) These resolutions and experience of Interim Eucharistic Sharing 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

³³ Cf. *BEM, Ministry*, paras 23 and 26, *Pullach*, para 79; *God’s Reign and Our Unity*, para. 92.

experiences encouraged elsewhere, and already existing relationships of full communion strengthened.

Respectfully submitted,
The Episcopal–Moravian Dialogue:

For the Episcopal Church:

The Rt. Rev. J. Gary Closter, co-chair
The Rev. Dr. Marion J. Hatchett
The Rev. Canon David L. Veal
Ms. Elizabeth Mellen

The Rev. Canon Jane B. Teter
The Rev. Thomas N. Rightmyer
The Rev. Canon Robert J. Miner
Dr. Thomas Ferguson

For the Moravian Church in America:

The Rev. Dr. William H. McElveen, co-chair
The Rev. Otto Dreydoppel Jr.

Ms. Peggy Cartner
The Rev. Gary L. Harke

Adopted in the 4th Plenary Session, June 15, 2002

THIRD PARTIAL REPORT
MISSION WITH OUR ECUMENICAL PARTNERS

- Re: Continuing dialogue with the Episcopal Church
- Whereas, the Moravian Church–Northern Province, together with the Moravian Church–Southern Province, has been engaged in an ecumenical bilateral dialogue with the Episcopal Church since 1999 with the intention of entering into a relationship of full communion; and
- Whereas, this bilateral dialogue has led representative of the two communions to explore opportunities for common ministries of witness and service that will only be strengthened as the two communions grow toward full communion; and
- Whereas, interim eucharistic sharing, as approved by the Moravian Synods of 2002 and the Episcopal General Convention of 2003, presents yet another path leading toward full communion; and
- Whereas, the dialogue is nearing the resolution of outstanding issues regarding the mutual recognition and reconciliation of ministerial orders; be it therefore
- RESOLVED: (3) The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province shall authorize continuing dialogue with the Episcopal Church for the 2006–2010 intersynodal period; and be it further
- RESOLVED: (4) The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province shall encourage its congregations to engage in Eucharistic sharing with congregations of the Episcopal Church according to the guidelines approved by the 2002 Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province; and be it further
- RESOLVED: (5) The 2006 Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province shall encourage its congregations to engage in common ministries of witness and service with congregations of the Episcopal Church in their communities; and be it further
- RESOLVED: (6) The provincial and interprovincial program agencies, with the assistance of representatives to the Episcopal–Moravian Dialogue, shall meet with counterparts from the Episcopal Church to negotiate opportunities for engaging in common ministries of witness and service; and be it further
- RESOLVED: (7) The 2010 Synod of the Moravian Church–Northern Province may include a eucharistic celebration according to the ritual and rubrics of *The Book of Common Prayer*, with a bishop of the Episcopal Church as the chief celebrant and with the participation of all bishops of the Unity resident in the Province and present at the Synod.

June 18, 2006

June 19, 2006—adopted without discussion or dissent

The Meaning Of Full Communion For Moravians

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."⁹ "The Unitas Fratrum is committed to the unity of the children of God as a reality created by God in Jesus Christ."¹⁰

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.

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.

⁹ *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*, "The Ground of the Unity," §6.

¹⁰ *Church Order of the Unitas Fratrum*, "The Witness of the Unitas Fratrum," §150.

The Meaning of Full Communion for Moravians

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.

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