

# Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion

## I. The Journey to Full Communion: Recommendations to the Churches

The Northern and [Southern Provinces](#) of the [Moravian Church in America](#), hereinafter termed the Moravian Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby agree that in their respective assemblies there shall be one vote to accept or reject, without separate amendment, the resolutions which follow. If adopted by both churches, each church agrees to take these measures to establish full communion:

WHEREAS Jesus our Shepherd calls us to unity so that the world may believe; and

WHEREAS Moravians and Lutherans share common theological traditions and commitments to mission; and

WHEREAS in North America Lutherans and Moravians have developed distinct church bodies while cooperating in serving our Lord; and

WHEREAS *Following Our Shepherd to Full Communion*, the report of the Lutheran-Moravian dialogue, affirmed that there are no church-dividing differences precluding full communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America; therefore be it resolved

1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America hereby recognize in one another the one, holy, catholic and apostolic faith as it is expressed in the Scriptures, confessed in the Church's historic creeds, attested to in the *Unaltered Augsburg Confession* and *Small Catechism*, and the *Ground of the Unity of the Unitas Fratrum*
2. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby
  - recognize the authenticity of each other's baptism and eucharists, and
  - extend sacramental hospitality to one another's members;
3. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America hereby
  - recognize each other's ordinations of persons to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament; and
  - recognize each other's polity and ministries of oversight (including the interpretation of church doctrines, discipline of members, authorization of persons for ordained and lay ministries, and provision for administrative functions);
4. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby recognize the full interchangeability and reciprocity of all ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament, subject to the constitutionally approved invitation for ministry in each other's churches;

5. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America hereby authorize the establishment of a joint commission by June, 2000.
  - to coordinate the implementation of these resolutions,
  - to assist joint planning for mission,
  - to facilitate consultation and common decision-making through appropriate channels in fundamental matters that the churches may face together in the future, and
  - to report regularly and appropriately to each church;
6. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through the aforementioned joint commission shall
  - encourage the development of worship materials to celebrate the churches' full communion,
  - encourage on-going theological discussion,
  - encourage joint formulation of educational materials, and
  - encourage continuing education for church professionals regarding the churches' full communion;
7. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby affirm that neither will issue an official commentary on the text of these resolutions that has not been approved by the joint commission as a legitimate interpretation thereof;
8. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Moravian Church in America hereby agree that each will continue to be in communion with all the churches with which each is in communion presently;
2. The Moravian Church in America and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America hereby
  - pledge to take each other and these agreements into account at every stage of their dialogues and agreements with other churches and faith traditions,
  - pledge to seek to engage in joint dialogue when appropriate, and
  - pledge not to enter into formal agreements with other churches and faith traditions without prior consultation with the other.

## 1. The Lutheran-Moravian Coordinating Committee

### **ELCA participants**

The Rev. Dr. Walter Wagner, co-chair  
*Allentown, Pennsylvania*

The Rev. Dr. Ronald Rinn  
*Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

The Rev. Martha Sheaffer  
*Lititz, Pennsylvania*

### **Moravian participants**

The Rev. Otto Dreydoppel, Jr., co-chair  
*Nazareth, Pennsylvania*

The Rev. Dr. C. Daniel Crews  
*Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

The Rev. Gary L. Harke, staff  
*Sun Prairie, Wisconsin*

The Rev. Dr. Darlis J. Swan, staff  
*Chicago, Illinois*

## **II. For the Record**

The Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue developed its agenda and character in light of the theological, historical and sociological realities of the two churches. While we have been close to each other geographically, ethnically and theologically, our churches in North America proceeded on separate denominational tracks. Our European origins indicate that we have been and still are in mutually enriching relationships. Jan Hus and the Bohemian Brethren who organized themselves as the *Unitas Fratrum* prepared the ground for the German Reformation led by Martin Luther. The latter and his colleagues encouraged and recognized the Brethren as partners in the renewal of the gospel. Persecuted and driven from their Bohemian and Moravian homelands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some of the *Unitas Fratrum* were given refuge at Herrnhut, the estate of the Lutheran pietist noble, Nicholas Ludwig, Count von Zinzendorf. While at Herrnhut and ministered to by local Lutheran pastors as well as encouraged by Zinzendorf, the Unity was renewed and re-invigorated. Zinzendorf's theological credentials were recognized on several occasions by Lutheran officials, and he was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Our two churches developed separate ecclesial organizations and identities in North America. The chief reasons for that separate development had much to do with the patterns of immigration from Germany and the religious pluralism which came to characterize English-speaking North America. Although Moravians were indefatigable missionaries to Native Americans in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they did not attempt, on a consistent basis, to establish Moravian churches on the frontier. The Unity resisted the denominational ecclesial pattern and organizational identity which emerged in the United States. Instead, they often chose to labor cooperatively with Lutheran, Reformed and Episcopal clergy and laity to advance the mission of the whole Church. The *Unitas Fratrum*, then and now, may provide a valuable precedent for ecumenical experience and attitude. In Asia, Africa and Europe, Moravians and Lutherans have long enjoyed what is now termed "full communion," including eucharistic hospitality and the full interchangeability of members and clergy.

Our churches have never issued mutual or unilateral condemnations one of the other. As will be shown in the Report, we both use the Scriptures as the source of our faith and life, confess the historic creeds and consider the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and Small Catechism to be true expressions of the Christian faith. Justification by faith through grace holds the same vital place among Lutherans and Moravians, and we acknowledge the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The differences between us have more to do with how we manifest religious devotion (piety), engage in theological reflection, and express ourselves organizationally. These are not unsubstantial differences, but they are well within the circle of full communion. One substantive incident, remembered chiefly by Lutherans, has given Moravian-Lutheran relationships in the United States a negative cast: the 1742 meeting and argument in Philadelphia between Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and Nicholas von Zinzendorf. That encounter and a few subsequent

quarrels among our pastors reflect tensions within Lutheran pietism and parish rivalries rather than critical doctrinal or confessional differences which are church-dividing. Indeed, neither the Ancient nor the Renewed Moravian Church experienced anything like the controversies which engaged Lutherans in the latter half of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. In place of a formal emphasis on dogma, Moravians focus on the priority of personal commitment to Jesus as Savior and the relationships among members of the community of believers. Throughout the Dialogue, the participants learned to listen to each other, recognizing that our theological methods have been shaped by our historical experiences. That listening and recognizing shaped the subjects with which we dealt and the ways in which we carried on our discussions.

The Lutheran participants were led to examine their pietist traditions, the influences of their immigrant heritages on their current outlooks, and their need to articulate more clearly their understandings of personal faith, the roles of the Holy Spirit, and the unity of the Church. Moravians, likewise, were moved to express themselves with greater clarity on doctrinal concerns, biblical hermeneutics, their own historical traditions, and church order. Together we searched for the meanings and purposes of ecumenicity, "full communion," and following our Shepherd into God's future.

The Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue began with conversations led by Dr. Arthur Freeman and Dr. Daniel Martensen. Dr. Freeman is a bishop of the Moravian Church and was professor of New Testament and Christian Spirituality at the Moravian Theological Seminary. Dr. Martensen was then the associate director of the Office for Ecumenical Affairs of the ELCA. The formulation of a preliminary set of goals, subsequently endorsed by the respective church bodies and the dialoguers, resulted from the initial conversations. The goals were:

1. to be responsible to the ecumenical vision in harmony with the Bible and the historical Moravian and Lutheran positions on ecumenicity, and to affirm the unity of the Church which already exists in Christ;
2. to explore further the historical and international connections of the Lutheran and Moravian churches;
3. to explore moving towards full communion with the Lutheran Church, including common recognition of each other's Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry;
4. to test and articulate Moravian and Lutheran theology and theological methodologies; and
5. to share with our churches at all levels the ongoing results of the Dialogue and to solicit reactions and counsel. This would also involve the sharing of information on other bilateral dialogues in which we were engaged.

The term "full communion" has a technical meaning in the ecumenical discussions in which the ELCA engages with other churches.<sup>1</sup> The characteristics denoted in that term are:

1. a common confessing of the Christian faith;
2. a mutual recognition of Baptism and a sharing of the Lord's Supper, allowing for the exchangeability of members;
3. mutual recognition and availability of ordained ministers to the service of all members of churches in full communion, subject only but always to the disciplinary regulations of the other churches;
4. a common commitment to evangelism, witness, and service;
5. a means of common decision making on critical common issues of faith and life; and
6. a mutual lifting of any condemnations that exist between the churches.

Movement toward full communion, therefore, is broad in scope, penetrating in depth, and far-reaching in its implications. It can involve a gradual process with interim stages of engagement, especially if the churches are significantly different from each other in polity and practice, and if the churches' pasts have been marked by misunderstanding and hostility.

The first formal meeting of the Dialogue was held at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania from December 11-13, 1992. Severe storms prevented Drs. Martensen, Wayne Burkette and C. Daniel Crews from attending personally. The latter two participated through multi-party telephone conversations. Dr. Walter Wagner presented a paper titled "Factors Which Have Shaped Lutheran Theologies And Views Of The Christian Life." Dr. Crews responded to the paper. The cognate paper, "What Has Shaped Moravian Theology And The Moravian View Of The Christian Life?" was jointly authored by Drs. Crews and Freeman and Prof. Otto Dreydoppel, Jr. Dr. Thelma Megill-Cobbler responded from the Lutheran side. Pastor Samuel Zeiser's paper, "A History Of Lutheran-Moravian Interaction In America: A Lutheran Perspective," elicited responses from Dr. Freeman.

The second meeting, June 13-15, 1993, took place at the Moravian Theological Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Dr. Wagner presented and Dr. Freeman responded to a paper, "How Our History Has Shaped Our Concept Of Our Ministry: A Lutheran Perspective." Dr. Crews presented and Dr. Megill-Cobbler responded to "How Our History Has Influenced Our Ministry: A Moravian Account." Pr. Zeiser continued the American historical account with "The Henry Melchior Muhlenberg Who Met Count Nicholas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf in 1742." Prof. Dreydoppel contributed "The Incident At Philadelphia: A Moravian Perspective On The Muhlenberg-Zinzendorf Encounter."

The third meeting, December 3-4, 1993, was held at Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Allentown, Pennsylvania. The general topic continued the subject of ministry with a focus on church order. Dr. Freeman shared his paper, "The Moravian Church: Its Faith And Order," and Dr. Megill-Cobbler presented "Recent Readings of The Lutheran Confessions And The Doctrine Of Ministry."

The fourth meeting returned to the Moravian Theological Seminary, June 24-25, 1994. Dr. David Yeago joined the Dialogue at the fourth meeting and Dr. Robert Helm replaced Dr. Wayne Burkette. Dr. Yeago offered a paper titled "The Holy Spirit, Grace And Growth In Lutheran Theology," Dr. Freeman contributed "The Nature Of The Spirit As The On-Going Grace Of God" and Dr. Crews presented "Moravian Views Of The Holy Spirit." Prof. Dreydoppel and Dr. Wagner put forward a preliminary outline for the Report and were instructed to prepare a more detailed draft for consideration.

The dialoguers were active between the fourth and fifth meetings. Dr. Yeago prepared a paper on the sacraments which he shared with Dr. Crews for response. The paper ("The Sacraments In Lutheran Doctrine: Theses, Documentation and Notes") and Dr. Crews' response were then circulated to the other members for consideration.

The fifth meeting, which had originally been scheduled for June 1995, was moved to March 22-23, 1996. Sarah Henrich from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary joined the Dialogue at

this meeting. The meeting began with a discussion of Yeago's paper and Crews' response. Most of the meeting time was then given to review of the Consensus statement which had been prepared by Walter Wagner, Arthur Freeman, and Otto Dreydoppel. Substantive and stylistic revisions were largely completed on March 23. The few items requiring clarification and editing, the Dialoguers agreed, were to be handled through correspondence prior to the circulation of proposed final draft texts to the members. The vote to accept the revised Consensus was unanimous and without reservation. A further vote recommended to our respective bodies that Drs. Freeman and Wagner be considered for inclusion on any subsequent Coordinating Committee. The items designated for clarification, editorial and related matters, and some ancillary historical were included in the draft texts circulated to the Dialoguers during May-July, 1996. The members concurred, explicitly and implicitly with the final text. The recommendations and the report were then forwarded to our churches.

After the meeting the Consensus paper, as revised, was circulated to the members of the Bilateral teams and others. The suggestions received were then included in the editing and it was returned to the members for their final approval. Final approval of the document was attained on August 8, 1996, date designated to receive final changes.

<sup>1</sup> Ecumenism Statement, ELCA.

<sup>2</sup> The ELCA's suggested stages toward full communion in circumstances which indicate that a gradual process is appropriate are:

- ecumenical cooperation. Here the ELCA enters into ecumenical relations based on the evangelical and representative principles;
- bilateral and multilateral dialogues. Here the ELCA enters into dialogues with varying mandates, with those who agree with the evangelical and representative principles, confess the Triune God, and share a commitment to "ecumenical conversion." This conversion or repentance includes openness to new possibilities under the guidance of God's Spirit.
- preliminary recognition. Here the ELCA can be involved on a church-to-church basis in eucharistic sharing and cooperation, without exchangeability of ministers.
  - a. one stage requires 1 and 2 above, plus partial, mutual recognition of church and sacraments with partial agreement in doctrine; and
  - b. a second stage requires 1, 2, and 3a, partial and mutual recognition of ordained ministers and of churches, fuller agreement in doctrine, commitments to work for full communion, and preliminary agreement on lifting any mutual condemnations; and
- full communion. At this stage the goal of the ELCA's involvement in the ecumenical movement has been fully attained. Here the question of the shape and form of full communion needs to be addressed and answered in terms of what will best further the mission of the Church in individual cases.

### **III. Historical Background from Prague to Philadelphia**

If the image of Jesus leading forth sheep from various folds to form one flock applies to our churches, our respective histories show that while we are institutionally separate, we share the same fold geographically and historically. At crucial times and in diverse places Lutherans and Moravians have contributed to each other's continuance and renewal. Likewise, for historical and geographical reasons rather than for theological causes, we have diverged from each other. The time has come for us to review key elements in our backgrounds in order to resume our journey toward full communion.

Chronologically and logically the journey begins with the origins of the *Unitas Fratrum*. Moravian dialoguers commented that their theology was expressed most often and most clearly not in formal propositions or confessional documents, and certainly not in polemics or dialectics. The Unity is best understood through its story (history), praise of God (worship), and commitment to discipleship (community). The Ancient Moravian Church underwent a number of transitions in doctrinal perspective as it developed and articulated its expressions of the Christian faith and mission.

Jan Hus (1371-1415) of the University of Prague serves as a seminal figure for all Protestants and pre-eminently for Moravians. His reliance on the primacy of Scripture, insights into the nature of the Church, zeal for reform, and courageous martyrdom provide motifs both theological and communal for his spiritual descendants. Movements in Bohemia and Moravia which developed after his death and subsequent conflicts led to the formation of the *Unitas Fratrum* at Kunvald, Bohemia in 1457. The ensuing decades were marked by persecution, privation, and spiritual searching. The desire was not to champion a theological principle as such but to seek to live as fully as possible in the love of Christ, in concord with fellow believers, and in harmony with the Sermon on the Mount. Their concern for the welfare of other Christians was manifested in their offering refuge to persecuted Waldensians around 1460. By 1467 the Brethren realized that they needed a more explicit organization. They gathered in Lhotka near Rychnov where they selected three persons as priests. A member having Roman ordination was sent to the Waldensians to seek their ordination, for it was believed they had a valid apostolic ministry. Returning he ordained the three selected and then resigned his Waldensian and Roman priesthood. Thus a connection was established with two lines of succession. Mathias of Kunwald was appointed to first place among the three colleagues, thus beginning a position which had episcopal authority and evolved into episcopal office though, it was also understood that there was no fundamental difference between a priest and bishop.<sup>1</sup> The episcopal office among Moravians is, therefore, of long standing and is intended for the preservation of the apostolic mission of the Church and the administration of its faith, life, and mission. This also indicates that from its origins the Unity understood itself as participating in the wider Church catholic, and was willing to gain from as well as to share with other Christians.

Events and personalities in sixteenth century Germany soon brought the Bohemian Brethren (as they were then called) into contact with Martin Luther (1483-1546). Widespread distortions by enemies and fears about heresies and rebellion in Bohemia were attached to the Brethren. Perhaps the slander lingered in the minds of Evangelical Germans for decades. When Eck and others attacked Luther as a Hussite and a "Bohemian," the charge was not simply limited to one person and a kingdom within the Holy Roman Empire. In the aftermath of the Leipzig Disputation (1519) and Diet of Worms (1521), the Bohemians provided the "Saxon Hus" with some of the writings of the martyr. Luther and his colleagues began to communicate and share ideas with the Brethren through Lukcs of Prague, Jan Roh and Jan Augusta. Generally, the Wittenbergers' theological influence was so pronounced that the years 1520 to 1546 are termed the Unity's "Period of Lutheran Orientation."

The intersections of personalities and exchanges of ideas were not uniformly smooth or without disagreement. The movement associated with Luther centered on theological and hermeneutical issues, although cultural and political matters were highly influential. The Lutheran focus on its

understanding of justification by faith without works of the Law as the teaching on which the Church stood or fell served to animate and inform the developing theology and practice of the evangelical movement. As Lutherans debated among themselves, against other Reformation movements, and with Rome, doctrinal clarity became a priority. And those debates often were belligerent, even hostile, in tone. Among the disputed topics were the centrality of justification, the place of good works, and the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Lutheran confessors at the Diet of Augsburg stated that the "Church is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian Church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the divine Word. It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies, instituted by men, should be observed uniformly in all places." The statement lost its irenic openness in subsequent debates.<sup>2</sup>

The leaders of the Unity who were in contact with Luther presented him with drafts of their *Apologia* and *Confessio*. They received and considered Lutheran suggestions and criticisms. Lutherans and Brethren agreed on justification and the nature of the Gospel. The final texts of the Brethren's documents clearly were influenced by the doctrinal portions of the Augsburg Confession (Articles I - XXI) and the Smalcald Articles (especially 2 and 3). The Lutheran insistence on further exposition about Christ's presence in the sacrament of the altar moved the Unity's leaders to greater clarity, but Lutherans still pushed for more detail. The final text of the *Confessio Bohemica*, 1535, was presented to the Lutheran margrave, George of Brandenburg. Luther provided a commendatory preface in which he wrote,

We, too, ought to give the greatest possible thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to the riches of his glory, commanded this light of His word to shine out of darkness, in order thereby to abolish death among us again and to bring life to light. We ought also to congratulate both them [the Brethren] and ourselves that we who have been far apart from each other have been brought together, now that the well of suspicion, by which we seemed to each other to be heretics, has been removed, and that we have been led into one fold under one Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, who is blessed forever. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

Luther and his associates acknowledged the criticisms of the Brethren concerning the lack of discipline and morality within Evangelical congregations. Melancthon and Luther continued to struggle with these issues through the catechisms, worship, and a stronger emphasis on prayer. On their part, the Brethren grew increasingly wary and weary of the seemingly interminable and divisive doctrinal wrangling among the proponents of the Reformation. Some within the Unitas advised merging with the Lutherans, but the decision was made to preserve the Brethren's identity with its sense of personal commitment to Jesus and close fellowship among its members. Clearly the contact between the Bohemians and Lutherans during Luther's lifetime was mutually helpful: the Brethren undertook to clarify their theological concerns and positions, the Lutherans were given vibrant examples of Christian unity and discipleship, and both were prepared for future ventures in following the Shepherd.

Protestant defeats in the Smalcaldic Wars (1546-48) pushed Lutherans and the Brethren to look to their own political and spiritual survival. Driven from Bohemia and Moravia into eastern

Prussia, Hungary and Poland, the Brethren lived under precarious conditions and were often the victims of dreadful persecution. Usually when German Lutheran rulers and city officials achieved measures of political stability and recognition, they held to the general assumption that there should be religious conformity in a state, in so far as that was possible. Consequently, they insisted that Christians in those territories should be Lutherans. For that reason the exiles from England during Queen Mary's reign who sought refuge in German Lutheran territories were given the choice of conforming to the Wittenberg theology or leaving. Many departed for the more hospitable climes of Calvin's Geneva. The Brethren who fled to Lutheran areas in Prussia often faced similar pressures. Again, the issues between the two communions were political, not theological.

Experiences of persecution and marginalization strengthened the Unity's dedication to be a servant community and underscored their perception that doctrinal polemics were inimical to God's will. They also developed a wide network of contacts with Reformed congregations and leaders in Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, and Germany.

The century between the ends of the Smalcaldic War and the Thirty Years War (1548-1648) was turbulent both politically and religiously. In the latter sphere rifts among Luther's associates escalated into personal animosities and theological factionalism. Philipists and Gnesio-Lutherans, two major camps which vied for dominance within the German Lutheran context, exchanged accusations of crypto-Calvinism and crypto-Romanism while demanding of themselves and others clearer and more detailed expositions of what was felt to be "orthodox teachings."

Nor were Lutherans alone in the quest for doctrinal "truth." The Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545-63), Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563), Second Helvetic Consensus Formula (1566) and Synod of Dort (1618) for the Reformed, Formula of Concord and Book of Concord among Lutherans (1577 and 1580), and Westminster Confession (1646) for English Presbyterianism all indicate the breadth and intensity of attempts to formulate Christian truth often over and against other Christians. Those who attempted to act as intermediaries were few in number and were usually vilified by one or both sides.

Such activity evidences both the anxieties and stabilization of the Reformed and Lutheran communions. Beneath these developments is the assumption that a society's security was at least partially dependent on the highest possible degree of religious conformity within its borders. Whether the times required such conformity is debatable, but in such a polemical atmosphere, many lay persons and clergy felt their hearts strangely chilled. A reaction was probably inevitable.

The Unity, too, attempted to formulate its positions. In 1616 the Brethren drew up the *Ratio Disciplinae Ordinisque Ecclesiastici in Unitate Fratrum Bohemorum*. Seven chapters spelled out the Essential, Ministerial and Incidental things of the Christian faith. The Essentials are those things which are necessary for human salvation. These are given by God and not of human derivation, and consist of the grace of the Father, the merit of Christ, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. On the part of humans, the Essentials are responded to through faith, love and hope. "The Ministerials" are the necessary means by which divine grace, Christ's merit and the operation of

the Spirit are conferred on humans, that is, by which faith, love and hope are enkindled, cherished and strengthened. The Ministerials are the Word of God, the keys, and the sacraments. The Word reveals the Essentials, the keys assign them, and the sacraments seal them. The ordained ministry of the Church is necessary to advance the purity of faith, the ardor of love, and the firmness of hope. The Incidentals are ceremonies and rites of human derivation and origin.<sup>4</sup> The *Ratio or Church Order*, given a final revision by Amos Comenius (1592-1670), has provided the language and categories which the Unity has used throughout its subsequent history to relate to its own internal situations and to reach out to other Christians.

The Protestant defeat at the battle of White Mountain (1620) was catastrophic for the Brethren. To force Protestants to return to the Roman Catholic Church and to dismantle their conventicles, the Hapsburg victors criminalized religious dissent while denying dissenters permission to depart legally from Moravia and Bohemia. The "Period of the Hidden Seed" (1620-1732) was marked by danger and anxiety as small groups meet clandestinely for fellowship, worship and study. Many fled their Czech homelands to become refugees in Poland and Germany, often seeking support from Brethren who had preceded them as well as with Reformed and Lutheran sympathizers. "Hidden" as they may have been, they were, nevertheless, the seed for a new growth of discipleship. The Reformed in Poland, also subject to religious repression, recognized the devotion and religious integrity of the members of the Unity.

Their courageous witness, devotion to Scripture, cultivation of communal fellowship, and spiritual warmth inspired many to associate with and then join the Unity. One such person, the shepherd-carpenter-soldier, Christian David, (1690-1756), was sustained physically and spiritually by Lutherans, and became a member of the Lutheran church in Berlin. His several Lutheran connections and his conviction that a shelter for his sisters and brothers could be found in Germany led him eventually to Count von Zinzendorf's estate in 1722. The section on which the Brethren settled was called Herrnhut ("Watching for the Lord" and "The Lord Watches"). Gradually a community took physical and spiritual shape under Zinzendorf's patronage. The Ancient Church was poised for renewal.

The traumas of the Thirty Years War together with the Enlightenment had profound effects on continental Protestantism. Simultaneously, a complex cross-fertilization took place through which the writings of Lutheran and Reformed leaders influenced English Anglicans and Puritans. Their writings, in turn, circulated in Germany, Switzerland and Scandinavia, gaining attention and promoting further developments. The religious winds were to cross the Channel again and the Atlantic during the mid-eighteenth century. Where once the *desiderata* of churches had been doctrinal precision and subscription, now there was a *Pia Desideria*, a "heart-felt desire for a God-pleasing reform of the true Evangelical Church."<sup>5</sup>

Pietism, a complex and variegated movement, still defies definitions. F. Ernst Stoeffler noted that Pietism insisted on:

the need for, and the possibility of an authentic and vitally significant experience of God on the part of individual Christians; the religious life as a life of love for God and man, which is marked by social sensitivity and ethical concern; utter confidence, with respect to the issues of both life and death, in the experientially verifiable authenticity of God's revelation in Christ, as found in

the biblical witness; the church as a community of God's people, which must be ever renewed through the transformation of individuals, and which necessarily transcends all organizationally required boundaries; the need for the implementation of the Reformation understanding of the Priesthood of all believers through responsible lay participation in the varied concerns of the Christian enterprise; a ministry which is sensitized, trained, and oriented to respond to the needs and problems of a given age; and, finally, the continual adaptation of ecclesiastical structures, practices, and verbal definitions to the mission of the church.<sup>6</sup>

Zinzendorf, like Luther, was a larger than life character: highly influential within and beyond his circle of associates, a creative thinker, and not above criticism. Again, like Luther among those who regard him as a spiritual forebear, Zinzendorf serves as an inspirational guide, while his ecclesial descendants have gone on to adapt to new challenges and circumstances. Indeed, Lutherans and Moravians have literally moved into a new world and on territory uncharted by Zinzendorf and Luther.

The Count's journey with the Savior included an austere upbringing steeped in Lutheran pietism which also made him acutely aware of his noble lineage. His guardians expected him to enter government service, and planned for him to focus on jurisprudence in his education. His baptismal sponsor was Spener, and a significant portion of his early education was undertaken at the pietist center, the Paedagogium at Halle, under the strict tutelage of August Hermann Francke (d. 1727). His departure to study law at Halle's rival, Wittenberg, generated a lasting animosity toward him that influenced Halle's later representative in Philadelphia, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg.<sup>7</sup> The leaders of Halle regarded the theology at Wittenberg to be stultified, while others considered Luther's academic base to be the true custodian of Reformation truth. While at Wittenberg, Zinzendorf expressed his devotion to God through engaging in a regimen which emphasized Bible study and prayer.

Later, Zinzendorf reflected that while at Wittenberg he was immersed in orthodox Lutheranism and took Luther as his theological guide. His engagement with Luther led him out of the intra-pietistic arguments about struggles for salvation and sanctification and to a reliance on God's justifying grace in Jesus Christ. Using the Augustinian-Lutheran theme of *simul justus et peccator*, Zinzendorf turned away from the predilections in pietism toward legalism and a rigid construction of the steps involved in conversion. While at Wittenberg, he developed an intense loyalty to the Augsburg Confession, the Small Catechism, and Luther's hymns and devotional writings.

He also organized several fellow students into small groups which pledged themselves to mission work. One of these, the Order of the Mustard Seed, grew to become an ecumenical fellowship. The young man was convinced that God called him to the ministry of Word and Sacraments through the Lutheran Church, and he studied theology more assiduously than law. His family resisted his desires on the grounds that the pastorate was beneath his social station. Following his marriage and eventual refusal to pursue a career in state offices, Zinzendorf determined to return to the family estates where Christian David and his associates had already settled. And so his life intersected with Christian David and the fugitive Brethren on a regular basis.

The youthful Zinzendorf gradually was drawn toward the Brethren, and increasingly became one of their leaders. Deeply impressed with their courage, devout prayer life and reliance on the mercy of God in Christ, he undertook to be responsible for their public worship. He was delighted to discover the *Ratio* and its provisions for ordered church life, and was especially interested in the Essentials. Because he understood that God could only be known in Christ, and because of the nature of his own religious experience, he expressed that which was essential as a saving relationship with Christ. In other words, he gave the Essentials a Christocentric focus. To provide for a regular ministry of Word and Sacraments among the Brethren at Herrnhut, Zinzendorf arranged for Lutheran pastors to conduct services, preach, and celebrate communion among the Brethren. His activities appeared to some Lutheran political and ecclesiastical authorities as a promotion of schism and sectarianism. That suspicion and subsequent opposition focus on grace and the *simul justus* of justification which were the key issues at dispute between the Halle and Wittenberg versions of Lutheran theology and piety. At every turn, however, the Count was able to show that he personally and the Brethren were well within the Lutheran fold.<sup>8</sup> Concerned about having an official validation of his theology and still convinced that he was called to the ordained ministry, he satisfied church and royal officials in Denmark, Sweden and Germany about his theological training. In 1734 the Pastoral College of Stralsund certified his orthodoxy and the Theological Faculty of Tbingen University issued an affidavit that Zinzendorf was a man in good standing, had all the knowledge of Christian faith in a manner which was fully acceptable for Lutheran orthodoxy, and indicated that they could see no objection as to why a man of high nobility should not also preach the Gospel. With this certification he publicly entered ministry in the Stiftskirche in Tubingen.<sup>9</sup>

The Unity was renewed spiritually and physically at the portion of Zinzendorf's estate called Herrnhut. This was a process of spiritually bringing together divergent groups in the Herrnhut settlement including Reformed, Lutherans, and the migrants from Moravia longing for renewal of their church. Zinzendorf provided pastoral care. Rules governing life on the Manor were signed by inhabitants. and in 1727, in the Lutheran parish church of Berthelsdorf, there was an experience of unity and renewal Moravians have since called their Pentecost. By 1732 missionaries were sent to the Caribbean following the testimony of an ex-slave to the Herrnhut community and the great age of Moravian experimentation in mission was begun. The missionaries' purpose was not to establish a new church body but to bring the gospel to the poor and the enslaved on the islands. In addition, Herrnhut served as the matrix from which the Unity developed marks which endure to the present, e.g., poetry, hymnody, musicianship, love feasts and communal decision making. By 1741, when having difficulty replacing the Chief Elder of their church, they were inspired to claim that Jesus was the Chief Elder and Lord of the Church and that in the Moravian church they would submit to his governance rather than electing someone to this central governmental position.

With the growing needs of the Unity and its developing mission, it became important to establish an ordained ministry. Because of the concerns of the significant segment of persons who had come from Moravia to reestablish their church, the Unity turned to the last remaining bishops of the Ancient Moravian Church. In 1699 Daniel Ernst Jablonsky, one of Comenius' grandsons, had been consecrated a bishop for the Brethren. Subsequently he became a Reformed pastor and then served as the court preacher in Berlin. To retain the historic episcopacy and to provide for the Unity's continuity, he with the concurrence of the other surviving Brethren bishop, Christian

Sitkovius, ordained David Nitschmann as a bishop (1735). King Frederick William I of Prussia encouraged an initially reluctant and now ordained Zinzendorf to be consecrated as a bishop for the Brethren as well. In 1737 at the urging of Herrnhuters and other supporters, Jablonsky consecrated Zinzendorf as a bishop for the Brethren.

Whereas bishops in the Ancient Moravian church had been diocesan, in the Renewed church they were intended to provide a ministry for the Unity's mission and not to be related to dioceses and thus competitive to the established church and their offices. This continues to be a feature of the Moravian episcopacy where bishops are bishops of the international Unity and do not only belong to and care for a particular jurisdiction. Frederick William specifically stated that the creation of bishops with the authority to ordain others to the ministry did not constitute the formation of a church separate from the legally recognized Lutheran, Reformed and Roman Catholic communions. Nevertheless Zinzendorf's detractors became suspicious of the Unity and its new bishop. The Hallesians could not but see Zinzendorf and those associated with him as rivals at best, and as potential schismatics.

The Count was moved by these events and his own study to give careful consideration to the nature of the Church and the meaning of unity in Christ. His Christocentric theological vision was a bold one. He began to understand the one, holy, catholic Church in terms which presaged the modern ecumenical movement, but gave cold comfort to his critics. By 1744 he envisioned the Church as a unity created by God, animated through the Spirit, and headed by Jesus Christ. His Christocentric focus on the Essentials led him to envision the unity of the Church as involving differing *tropes* or "methods of training" such as the Lutheran, Moravian, Reformed and, as it developed, Anglican and Methodist tropes.<sup>10</sup> Each had its own God-given mission and method for leading persons to a relationship with Christ. An obvious corollary was that no one church had a corner on the truth and that theological wrangling was inimical to the true unity of the Church which God willed.

Waves of immigrants to British North America and the Caribbean challenged Protestants at the same time that their missionary impulses were leading them to consider bringing the gospel to Asia and Africa. Renewed political and religious tensions in Austria together with the accession of the Hanoverians to the throne of the United Kingdom gave the new world the appearance of being both a haven and a home for many German-speaking Protestants. An atmosphere of communal experimentation, particularly in Georgia and Pennsylvania, attracted different groups and individuals as did the more usual reasons for departing from one's homeland: economic opportunities, avoidance of military conscription, and venturesomeness. Where Germans and Scandinavians went, so did the Lutheran and Reformed understandings of Christianity. And so did the members of the Unity. Although the mutual relationships and influences among the Episcopalians, nascent Methodist movement, Lutherans and Brethren are beyond the scope of this report, it is worth noting that the Unity provided crucial links which mediated Lutheran understandings of justification and devotional life to English-speaking evangelicals in Great Britain and the Americas. In turn and from their origins, the small Moravian communities first in Georgia and then in Pennsylvania engaged in mission work among Native Americans, established schools, and ministered to the orphaned and poor.

The spiritual needs of the German immigrants became painfully clear. The Psalmist's question of how can the Lord's song be sung in a foreign land was compounded by ecclesiastical fragmentation and rivalry between Reformed and Lutheran leaders, and the immigrants' inexperience with not being part of a state church which provided fiscal support, certified clergy and authority to resolve disputes. For all the resemblances the colonies bore to the old world, the settlers soon realized that they were in a new world geographically, intellectually and spiritually. Naturally, there were those who sought to bring order and coherence into their situations, and there were others who sought to exploit the unsettled conditions for their own ends.

The provision of Word and Sacrament ministry and the development of German-speaking congregations in and around Philadelphia involved Reformed, Lutheran, Schwenkfelder and Mennonite Christians. Sometimes each went its separate way and occasionally they cooperated. Joint efforts tended to be less on the basis of theology than their shared ethnicity. The Moravian emphasis on heartfelt religion and following the Savior led them neither into doctrinal debates nor the establishment of specifically Moravian congregations. They became part of the founders and leaders of German-speaking congregations, advocating the provision of ministry to German individuals and communities, joint efforts with English-speaking Christians, and mission work among the unchurched of all races in the colony. In order to move that work forward and to inform himself of the opportunities in America, Zinzendorf traveled to the colonies.

At the same time relations between pietists and orthodoxists in Germany deteriorated. The latter considered the former as near-schismatics largely because of the pietist emphases on the laity and conventicles, both of which seemed prone to undermine the stability of the official church, its clergy, and doctrinal interpretations. More specifically, the Hallesian pietists were becoming increasingly critical of the Herrnhuters and particularly Zinzendorf. Several congregations in the Philadelphia area requested that the Halle authorities send to them at least one certified pastor. These congregations were embroiled in disputes with men who either were pastors but aroused controversy or men who had dubious credentials. Concerned that the congregations would not be willing or able to support a pastor, the leaders at Halle delayed - until they learned that Zinzendorf planned to go to Pennsylvania. Halle responded by ordaining and dispatching Henry Melchior Muhlenberg as the called pastor to those congregations which had requested Halle's assistance.<sup>11</sup>

The sole meeting between the two men (1742) can be understood on the levels of personal encounter, ecclesiastical polity, and different perspectives on the establishment of the Church in Pennsylvania. Muhlenberg felt responsible for planting a church which retained the European traditions and institutions. Zinzendorf wanted to explore a new ecumenical Protestantism called "The Congregation of God in the Spirit," a concern which gave birth to the Pennsylvania Synods at which many different traditions were represented. Muhlenberg felt that unless order could be introduced into the congregations, the members of those communities could be bereft of sound teaching, discipline and worship. Each claimed the right to represent the Lutheran Church. That Muhlenberg was sent by Halle, now estranged from Zinzendorf, did not help. Personality characteristics undoubtedly played a role. Cast into a power struggle in which each perceived the other as denying the validity of his authority and jurisdiction, the men parted with reciprocal hostility."

In one sense the journey from Prague to Philadelphia might be said to have ended the creative and supportive relationships between Lutherans and Moravians in the United States. While there have been joint endeavors and warm relationships between many congregations in the respective churches, Lutherans have recalled the Muhlenberg-Zinzendorf encounter as defining church-dividing differences, but Lutherans have not themselves articulated what was at stake ecclesially or theologically. Another sense in which the journey ended at Philadelphia, at least symbolically, is that the Unity and the Lutherans went on to separate ecclesiastical lives. American denominationalism, not theology, was the chief factor that led them to form two different organizations.

But the journey with the Savior did not end in 1742. Chronologically long overdue, yet in a kairotic time, Lutherans and Moravians are able to see that we have come far together internationally. We are now ready to recognize that the Savior is calling his Moravian and Lutheran flocks to full communion and mission in the 21st century.

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<sup>1</sup>Rudolf Oiean, *The History of the Unity of the Brethren: A Protestant Hussite Church in Bohemia and Moravia*, translated by C. Daniel Crews, Bethlehem, PA: The Moravian Church in America, 1992, pgs. 39-41.

<sup>2</sup> *Augsburg Confession*, Article VII.

<sup>3</sup> See Jaroslav Pelikan. *Luther And The Confessio Bohemica of 1535*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, Chicago, 1946. Translation is Pelikan's.

<sup>4</sup> B. Seifferth. *Church Constitution Of The Bohemian And Moravian Brethren*. London: W. Mallalieu, Co., 1866.

<sup>5</sup> The full title of Philip Jacob Spener's 1675 seminal work is *Pia Desideria or Heartfelt Desire for a God-pleasing Reform of the true Evangelical Church, together with Several Simple Christian Proposals looking toward this End*. See the edition by Theodore Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964, reprinted 1982.

<sup>6</sup> Peter C. Erb, Pietists. *Selected Writings*, New York: Paulist Press, 1983, pg. 7. The Stoeffler quotation is from his *German Pietism during the Eighteenth Century*, Leiden: n.p., 1973 pg. ix.

<sup>7</sup> Zinzendorf's major disagreement with the Hallesian form of pietism concerned the stages a person was thought to experience on the way to conversion. Zinzendorf considered Halle's insistence on a particular universal pattern to be rigid and open to question.

<sup>8</sup> In 1732 a commission from Dresden investigated the Herrnhuters' orthodoxy and found them theologically sound. Friedrich Christoph Oettinger, of the University of Tbingen's theological faculty spent 1733-34 at Herrnhut, leading the community and the Count in biblical and theological studies. The animosities between the Hallesians and Zinzendorf were enlarged when August Gottlieb Spangenberg (1704-1792), dismissed as superintendent of Halle's orphan house

because of his sympathies for Zinzendorf, joined the Brethren at Herrnhut. One of Spangenberg's successors at Halle was Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. It is important to recognize that the developing differences between Halle and the Moravians revolved around Zinzendorf's assertion of "grace alone," not only in terms of justification but also regarding the holiness which was also a gift of God. Thus Moravian pietism was not Halle pietism.

<sup>9</sup> Erich Beyreuther, *Die grosse Zinzendorf-Trilogie*, Marburg an der Lahn: Franck-Buchhandlung GmbH;1988, Band III, *Zinzendorf und die Christenheit*, pp 73-87. Zinzendorf's progress toward certification of theological orthodoxy was complicated largely by political-religious rivalries in several German states and Swedish domination of other German states. The Count always considered himself a loyal and theologically sound Lutheran, and was considered so even by his ecclesiastical detractors. See John R. Weinlick, *Count Zinzendorf. The Story of His Life And Leadership In the Renewed Moravian Church*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1956, especially pgs. 114-127.

<sup>10</sup> The development of the idea of *tropes* was also partially influenced by the persistence of the refugees from Moravia in continuing the existence of their ancient church while Zinzendorf wanted his community to remain a society within the Lutheran Church. Thus it became important to recognize the different approaches and religious traditions not only outside but within the Moravian Church.

<sup>11</sup> Before his departure from Germany, Muhlenberg was accused of being a schismatic because he held prayer meetings in his rooms. Zinzendorf's aunt, one of the Count's severest critics, gave Muhlenberg her version of her nephew's character. That description seems to have framed the new pastor's perspective on the man he met in Philadelphia. Curiously, while Muhlenberg left a detailed account of his interview with Zinzendorf - an account which he also shared with the Halle authorities - there is no parallel account in Zinzendorf's diary or from Moravian sources. For Muhlenberg's account see *The Journals Of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg*, edited by Theodore Tappert and John Doberstein, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1942, reprinted by Whipporwill Publications, Evansville, 1982 volume 1, pgs. 75-81. The encounter took place on December 29, 1742.

## **IV. Perspectives on Theology, Affirmations, and Complementarities**

As Christians listen to the voice of the Shepherd and seek to follow, we will leave some of our traditional securities, yet we will gain deepened identities as God's people in mission. Perhaps we will understand more fully Jesus' prayer, "I ask not only on behalf of these [disciples], but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one" (John 17:20, NRSV). The Lutheran-Moravian Dialogue and our churches' movement toward full

communion are set in the contexts of dialogues and journeys toward unity in which Christians and their churches encounter each other anew. Today we have concluded that Christian unity need not mean corporate unification, but involves what we have previously called "full communion."

At the same time, the twentieth century, for all its startling scientific and technological advances, has also witnessed the often lethal fragmentation of the human family along racial, ethnic, religious, gender, political and economic lines. The deconstruction of shared meanings between and within communities, together with rising levels of anxiety and violence, underscore the need and hunger for coherence without coercion and community with continuity. In this time Christians hear and seek to respond to God's summons to recognize the unity which we already have and to manifest our confidence in the Lord who calls all persons to himself.

Part of the response to God and the Church's mission to the world involves new approaches in ecumenical dialogues and actions. One such approach is indicated in *Baptism, Eucharist And Ministry (BEM)* developed by the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission.<sup>1</sup> The Commission invited the churches to consider how one church recognizes the apostolic faith in the life and thought of another church. At that level the respective communities are freed from insisting on verbal or conceptual exactitude or uniformity of practice in their formulations and actions. Here BEM foreshadowed what we term shortly "Mutual Affirmations." Next, each church was asked to consider whether it could learn from others so as to gain a fuller understanding of and richer expression for its witness to and praise of God. At this level *BEM* foreshadowed what we call "Mutual Complementarities."

The Moravian and Lutheran dialoguers recognized that our conversations were roughly analogous to the methods used in BEM and the bilateral dialogues in which Lutherans have engaged in recent decades. We encountered frequently the need to explain our perspectives on theology and theology's roles in the spheres of personal, ecclesial, and social life. In effect, we realized the importance of the fourth goal of our original charge: "to test and articulate Moravian and Lutheran theology and theological methodologies." Our attitudes toward, understandings of theology's functions, and the means we employ to express ourselves emerged as vital to our self-understandings and our understandings of each other. The balance of this Report follows the pattern Perspectives On Theology, Mutual Affirmations, Mutual Complementarities, and Concluding Statement

<sup>1</sup> *Baptism, Eucharist And Ministry*, Faith and Order Paper 114, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982. The way that churches were asked to respond to Baptism, Eucharist And Ministry provides a meaningful paradigm for the way churches are called upon to respond to each other. This could be summarized as:

1. the extent to which your church can recognize in these recommendations the faith of the Church through the ages and the church of which you are a member
2. the consequences your church may draw from these recommendations and our churches shared and contrasting understandings of the Christian faith; and
3. the guidance your church can take from these recommendations for its worship, educational ethical and spiritual life and witness.

Several American church bodies of the Reformed tradition have been engaged in dialogue with Lutheran churches since 1962. In the wake of mergers and the formation of new ecclesiastical entities, those churches are now the Presbyterian Church (USA), Reformed Church in America, and United Church of Christ, and the ELCA. The Formula of Agreement to establish full communion between the Reformed churches and the ELCA was presented to the respective church conventions/assemblies in 1997 and accepted by all bodies.

## **IV. A. Perspectives on Theology**

Lutherans and Moravians have different yet complementary attitudes toward and experience with theological discourse and formulations. Lutherans expect their churches to engage in theological discussions, adhere to creedal-confessional formulations, and teach from doctrinal perspectives. The Lutheran movement originated in theological debate and coalesced about a series of confessional documents. Luther, his associates, and their successors in the sixteenth century developed and deepened their understandings of Law and Gospel, biblical interpretation, liturgical renewal, the sacraments, society, pastoral activity and other major areas of Christian life and witness in the face of and in the heat of theological explorations and disputations with Roman Catholics, other Reformation movements and leaders, and among themselves. Since the sixteenth century Lutherans have retained the attitude that theological debate, clarity, and adherence are vital for the integrity and continuity of the Christian faith. They anticipate that theological discourse, personal piety and intellectual acuity will be balanced and mutually supportive one of the other.

Lutherans are convinced that such theological discourse is more than possible; it is necessary if the Church is to speak and act knowingly as well as feelingly, in seeking to be faithful to the Lord. While Lutherans recognize the importance of social and historical contingencies, they also insist that there are theological consistencies which are to be believed, taught and confessed as essential for understanding, living and transmitting the faith. Christian theology involves disciplined reflection on the Triune God, the human condition, the Church, and the world. The roles of such disciplined reflection include the Church's stating to itself and for its own edification as well as correction what the Christian faith holds true, and how the Church is to be shaped and guided by that faith. Another dimension of theological reflection involves equipping believers for mission and witness in the world. Further, theology has an apologetic function through which Christians seek to make clear where they stand in relations with other religions and claimants for human devotion and allegiance.

While Lutheran theologians may use different methods to carry on the theological tasks, they do so in reference to a threefold authoritative basis. First, they agree that the basis, criteria, and guide for faith, doctrine and practice is the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments. In traditional language; "We believe, teach and confess that the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments are the only rule and norm according to which all doctrines and teachers alike must be appraised and judged."<sup>2</sup> Second and as a valid witness to the Scriptures, Lutherans receive, use and pledge themselves to the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds as the "unanimous, catholic, Christian faith and confessions of the orthodox and true church."<sup>3</sup> The

place of the third component, a set of specific documents composed in the sixteenth century and compiled as the *Book of Concord*, is more complex.

The documents are the Augsburg Confession, Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Smalcald Articles (with the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope appended), Large Catechism, Small Catechism, and Formula of Concord. These are regarded as consonant with yet subordinate to the Scriptures. Within the circle of confessional literature, the "Unaltered" Augsburg Confession is regarded as having given Lutherans "a clear and unequivocal Christian witness, setting forth the faith and teaching of the Evangelical Christian churches concerning the chief articles, especially those which were in controversy between them and the popes adherents [W]e abide by the plain, clear, and pure meaning of its words. We consider this Confession a genuinely Christian symbol which all true Christians ought to accept next to the Word of God, just as in ancient times Christian symbols and confessions were formulated in the church of God."<sup>4</sup> The first twenty-one articles of the Augsburg Confession deal with matters of faith and doctrine, while the remaining six articles concern issues related to human practices. While the other documents are regarded highly among Lutherans, the two Catechisms hold an especially cherished position.<sup>5</sup> We observe that the *Formula of Concord* and Lutheran practice also give the writings of Martin Luther a significant position as a model for stating the Christian faith.<sup>6</sup>

The constitutions of the ELCA, its synods and congregations contain a section, "Chapter 2. Confession of Faith," which essentially repeats the positions cited from the Formula Of Concord regarding the roles of the Scriptures, Creeds and the Confessions. It concludes, "This church confesses the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the Church for God's mission in the world" (2.07). At the ordination of a person to the office of the ministry of Word and Sacraments, the bishop states "The Church into which you are to be ordained confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and are the norm of faith and life. We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. We also acknowledge the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures. Will you therefore preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these creeds and confessions?" The candidate's expected response is, "I will, and I ask God to help me."<sup>7</sup> It is highly unlikely that Lutherans will add to the corpus of their Confessions. They do, however, develop and discuss theological statements and declarations, sometimes adopting them for guidance. Because of their historical conditioning and theological focus, Lutherans look askance at other faith communities which formulate or add confessions to their theological treasuries, especially when some of those confessions appear to contradict or replace or re-interpret the confessions Lutherans cherish.

Explicitly and implicitly, Lutheran methods appear to move from Scripture to Creeds and then to Confessions when Lutherans analyze, assess, express and formulate positions, practices, liturgies, and actions. Actually, within the triad is an inner canon. In the realm of Scripture, Pauline positions on justification (as understood by Lutherans) have priority.<sup>8</sup> The Augsburg Confession occupies first place among the Confessions.

Moravians, while influenced deeply and positively by Lutheran individuals and Lutheran theology, have also observed debilitating arguments and confusions created by those who

thought they possessed God's truth to the exclusion of other insights. Moravians regard theological polemics as contrary to the Savior's will and love. Having been persecuted and vilified, they decline to use those tactics when dealing with others and when coping with problems within their own communion. A 1979 statement on theology by the Joint Theological Commission of the Northern and Southern Provinces, USA puts the Moravian understanding of theology's purpose and role clearly:

Theological reflection in the Moravian tradition is not to be understood as an attempt to arrive at final answers but is a way of thinking about God and His relationship to us so that He can, through His Spirit, draw us to Himself, and to His Son, and we can know Him as the Source of our living. Such reflection should lead to sharing of ideas and experiences, articulation of our faith, new levels of trust toward each other as persons through whom God partially discloses Himself in various ways, stimulation of the Christian life and our attentive waiting upon God for His clarification of our understanding.

If "confessional" describes Lutheran theological methods and purposes, "relational and devotional" fit Moravians. Certainly Moravians insist that theological tasks are to be pursued with intellectual rigor and the best means scholarship provides. Certainly Moravians recognize that a person and a community theologize within historical, social, and ecclesiastical contexts. Certainly Moravians are insightful about the degrees that their vibrant connections to Moravia, Saxony and Pietism still invigorate the Unity. And certainly Moravians have doctrinal, liturgical, and institutional benchmarks to assess positions, proposals and practices. But these are secondary.

Moravian perspectives on the Christian faith generally, and the Unity's distinctive positions particularly, are formed by the affirmation that at heart Christianity is relational and devotional, not abstract or conceptual. The central goal of theology is to foster the Christian life. Theological inquiry is only partially planned and structured by humans; it is also an openness and discipleship to the Savior. For Moravians, prayer and worship are essential components in undertaking theological study and discourse. The Ground Of The Unity, a deliberately revisable statement of principles used by the world-wide Moravian Church, opens with the following:<sup>9</sup>

1. The Lord Jesus Christ calls His Church into being so that it may serve Him on earth until He comes. The Unitas Fratrum is, therefore, aware of its being called in faith to serve mankind by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It recognizes this call to be the source of its being and the inspiration of its service. As is the source, so is the aim and end of its being based on the will of its Lord.

2. With the whole of Christendom we share faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe and confess that God has revealed Himself once and for all in His Son Jesus Christ; that our Lord has redeemed us with the whole of mankind by His death and His resurrection; and that there is no salvation apart from Him. We believe that He is present with us in the Word and Sacrament; that He directs and unites us through His Spirit and thus forms us into a Church. We hear Him summoning us to follow Him, and pray Him to use us in His service. He joins us together mutually, so that knowing ourselves to be members of His body we become willing to serve each other.

In the light of divine grace, we recognize ourselves to be a Church of sinners. We require forgiveness daily, and live only through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. He redeems us from our isolation and unites us into a living Church of Jesus Christ.

3. The belief of the Church is effected and preserved through the testimony of Jesus Christ and through the work of the Holy Spirit. This testimony calls each individual personally, and leads him to the recognition of sin and to the acceptance of the redemption achieved by Christ. In fellowship with Him the love of Christ becomes more and more the power of the new life, power which penetrates and shapes the entire person. As God's Spirit so effects living belief in the hearts of individuals, He grants them the privilege to share in the fruits of Christ's salvation and membership in His body.

To balance what might be perceived as a tilt toward the "internal," or "subjective" or "heart theology," the *Ground* continues with "external," or "objective," or "mind" factors:

4. The Triune God as revealed in the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament is the only source of our life and salvation; and this Scripture is the sole standard of the doctrine and faith of the Unitas Fratrum and therefore shapes our life.

The Unitas Fratrum recognizes the Word of the Cross as the center of Holy Scripture and of all preaching of the Gospel and sees its primary mission, and its reason for being, to consist in bearing witness to this joyful message. We ask our Lord for power never to stray from this.

The Unitas Fratrum takes part in the continual search for sound doctrine. In interpreting the Scripture and in the communication of doctrine in the Church, we look to two millennia of ecumenical Christian tradition and the wisdom of our Moravian forebears in the faith to guide us as we pray for fuller understanding and ever clearer proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But just as the Holy Scripture does not contain any doctrinal system, so the Unitas Fratrum also has not developed any of its own, because it knows that the mystery of Jesus Christ which is attested to in the Bible, cannot be comprehended completely by any human mind or expressed completely in any human statement. Also it is true that through the Holy Spirit the recognition of God's will for salvation in the Bible is revealed completely and clearly.

5. The Unitas Fratrum recognizes in the creeds of the Church the thankful acclaim of the Body of Christ. These creeds aid the Church in formulating a Scriptural confession, in marking the boundary of heresies, and in exhorting believers to an obedient and fearless testimony in every age. The Unitas Fratrum maintains that all creeds formulated by the Christian Church stand in need of constant testing in the light of the Holy Scriptures. It acknowledges as such true professions of faith the early Christian witness: "Jesus Christ is Lord!" and also especially the ancient Christian creeds and the fundamental creeds of the Reformation.\*

\*Note: In the various provinces of the Renewed Unitas Fratrum the following creeds in particular gained special importance, because in them the main doctrines of the Christian faith find clear and simple expression:

The Apostles' Creed

The Athanasian Creed

The Nicene Creed  
The Confession of the Unity of the Bohemian Brethren of 1535  
The Twenty-One Articles of the unaltered Augsburg Confession  
The Shorter Catechism of Martin Luther  
The Synod of Berne of 1532  
The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England  
The Theological Declaration of Barmen of 1934  
The Heidelberg Catechism

Moravians consider truth neither as a quantity to possess nor as able to be finalized in formulas. Truth involves a personal journey in the company of other believers toward the fulfillment God promises in the crucified and risen Lord who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. The Christian community is part and parcel of the Unity's theological method and purposes. That "company" is a "living Church" which witnesses for Christ to the world." Again from the Ground:

52. A church is and remains a living one when it: is attentive to God's Word, confesses its sins and accepts forgiveness for them, seeks and maintains fellowship with its Lord and Redeemer by means of the Sacraments, places its whole life under His rule and daily leading, ministers to its neighbour and seeks brotherhood with all who confess Christ, proclaims to the world the tidings concerning the Saviour, awaits whole-heartedly the coming of its Lord as King.

Moravians, wary of concretizing the Christian faith in humanly developed theological statements, encourage both structure and freedom in theological discourse. Their openness to the personal and devotional dimensions of theological methods is a reminder of the arid arguments of 16th-18th century successors to the Reformers, and places a lively emphasis on the Spirit's activity in theological methods and discussions. Recollection and narration of historical experience, both communal and personal, and worship shape theological method and expression. While worship reflects theology in most communions, the Moravian worship shapes and empowers theology as relational and devotional, and recalls significant events in the Unity's history. The Easter Liturgy, for example, is designed to be a confessional service. Citations from the Small Catechism's Explanations to the Apostles' Creed are prominent in the service. Perhaps we may draw a rough analogy between Lutherans and Moravians at this point: what the Confessions are to Lutherans, the Unity's history and worship are to Moravians.

In summary, Lutheran and Moravian theological methods differ from each other, yet we venture to conclude that the differences are mutually supportive and complementary. If Moravians counsel Lutherans about the divisive and self-defeating risks of doctrinal polemics, Lutherans counsel Moravians about the need to develop greater clarity and consistency in stating their interpretations of the faith. Both approaches need each other in order to undertake theological efforts which are carefully formulated and open to the power of God for the Church and the world. We turn now to some key Mutual Affirmations, and Complementarities.

<sup>2</sup> *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part I*, 1. Note that all references to the documents contained in the Lutheran Confessions are from The Book Of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, published originally in 1959.

<sup>3</sup> *Formula of Concord, Epitome, Part 1, 2.*

<sup>4</sup> *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, 3 and 4.* Philip Melanchthon, author-compiler of the Augsburg Confession, re-edited and modified portions after 1530. While the original text and details about the presentation of the original Confession before Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg are uncertain, Lutherans have settled on a *textus receptus* in Latin and German which is termed the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

<sup>5</sup> See *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, 8.*

<sup>6</sup> See *Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, 6 and 8.*

<sup>7</sup> Occasional Services, Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1982, pg. 194 from the rite of ordination.

<sup>8</sup> Especially Romans, Galatians and Ephesians.

<sup>9</sup> The most recent text of the *Ground Of The Unity* is that revised by the Unity Synod (the international assembly of the Unity) which was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The revision concerned Para. 4 "God's Word and Doctrine." The following note accompanied the revision: "The difficulty experienced with the formulation of 1957 was a wording adopted by the Synod which had never been used by the Moravian Church before. Moravians have always called Scripture 'the only rule (norm, standard) of faith and doctrine.' In the statement of 1957 it was for the first time also called 'the only source' which was interpreted by some Moravians as meaning 'the only source of information about everything.' Moravians have also always believed that God was the source of their life, not just the book, as important as it is, which bears witness about God. Jesus in John 5:39 says that people search Scriptures because they think to have eternal life in them, but rather do they bear witness to him, the One who is the source of life." For further information concerning the *Ground* prior to the changes of 1995, see C. Daniel Crews, *Confessing Our Unity In Christ. Historical and Theological Background to "The Ground of the Unity,"* prepared for presentation to the Moravian Clergy Association (January 6, 1994) and published at the request of the Provincial Elders Conference, Southern Province. The changes in #4 were proposed by the Northern and Southern Provinces in their 1994 and 1995 meetings prior to the international Synod, further suggestions were proposed by the Theological College in Mbeya, Tanzania, and then Unity Synod modified the text in the process of accepting it. As a source of doctrine we also call attention to the Church Order of the *Unitas Fratrum* (Moravian Church), published by the Moravian Church, *Unitas Fratrum*,: Lansdowne, Republic of South Africa, 1988, The present version of this is as revised by the Unity Synod in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 1995. This document, which is foundational for the Church Orders of all the provinces, includes The Ground of the Unity, Essential Features of the Unity, Constitution of the *Unitas Fratrum*, Church Life in the *Unitas Fratrum*, and Mission Outreach. The section on Church Life includes subsections on the important areas of sacraments and ministry.

Besides these sources of doctrinal reflection and understanding, Moravians would call attention to the *Book of Worship*, especially the Easter Morning Liturgy which is primarily a confession of the faith of the Church. Moravian Churches around the world may use various catechisms and

there is a history of various catechisms used in the North American Moravian Church, the last revision being: *Catechism of the Moravian Church, Published by Order of the Provincial Synod of 1956*. On the history of Catechisms in the Moravian Church see "Catechisms in the Moravian Church in America: A Brief Preliminary Report to the Interprovincial Faith and Order Commission" by C. Daniel Crews, November, 1994 (unpublished).

There is also the *Moravian Covenant for Christian Living* (previously called the *Brotherly Agreement*) which is supposedly signed by members of Moravian congregations and over the years has undergone numerous changes. This has its origin in the manorial rules signed by the congregation in Herrnhut in 1727. Since the 1960s this has had a doctrinal section at the beginning partially based on the *Ground of the Unity*."

## **IV. B. Mutual Affirmations**

The lines between Affirmations and Complementarities may be said to be more porous than they are either sharp or blurred. On the one hand, our backgrounds in the Reformation and Pietism, refracted through our experience in North America, result in significantly large areas of agreement. After all, we affirm the Reformation's principles in virtually identical terms. We seek to apply the Bible to our faith, practice, and mission. Our churches profess and use the three historic creeds of western Christianity, the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession, and the *Small Catechism*. On the other hand, our backgrounds, experiences and present self-understandings lead us to express ourselves differently in doctrinal and liturgical methods and attitudes. The differences, however, prove to be mutually supportive and enriching - hence the porosity between Affirmations and Complementarities. Put simply, we are not clones one of the other, but sheep from the same fold called to journey more closely with one another as we follow our Shepherd.

Three interpenetrating and important areas fit the description "Mutual Affirmations," and deserve particular comment. Our churches expect to recognize in each other substantial agreement on the nature of the Gospel and on the sacraments. The dialoguers also realized that the Biblical-Reformation principle of justification is essential to that agreement. In presentations and discussions we explored our historical and theological understandings of the Word of God as the traditional framework for the three areas. The dialogue showed that our respective communions have comparable spectrums of diverse attitudes toward and positions on the Word as Law and Gospel and as Scripture. We discerned no significant differences between our churches in content, our attitudes toward, and methods of understanding the Word of God. To aid our churches in the movement toward full communion, the dialoguers concluded that it would be helpful to discuss our mutual affirmations on the Gospel of God in Jesus Christ, Justification By Faith, and the Sacraments.

### **1. The Gospel**

Moravians and Lutherans affirm the centrality, power, and authority of the Gospel in Jesus Christ. God's revelation in and through the Gospel may be expressed in conceptual terms, yet it is far more than doctrines and formulas. Indeed, the Gospel is not an "it;" the Gospel is a person,

Jesus of Nazareth. He is the Word made human, alive and present in, with and through our experiences, dilemmas and hopes. He is God in person, that is, really present in every area and situation of life as well as by personally relating God's grace and acceptance to us.

To believe in the Gospel is to trust with our whole beings and to profess in our words and actions that Jesus is our Savior and Shepherd. Through his incarnation, death, resurrection and exaltation, he seals God's promises to be with his people and to raise them to eternal life. The message of God's presence and assurance of everlasting fellowship is proclaimed as saving good news in the Scripture, heard in preaching and words of reconciliation spoken by believers, and made visible in the sacraments. This message is named Jesus; he is the divine Promise in fully human form.

Lutherans and Moravians affirm that all persons need the Gospel because we are sinners unable to merit God's favor. Left to ourselves, we are in bondage to evil and headed toward spiritual death. The good news in Christ, however, bestows forgiveness from and reconciliation with God. Jesus' death and resurrection break the power of sin and evil. Moreover, we agree that God's mercy is inseparable from our being renewed through the Spirit to serve God and do God's will. To believe the Gospel, that is, to trust in Christ's gift of life through grace produces "good fruits and good works."<sup>10</sup>

At the same time, Moravians and Lutherans agree that believers are far from being perfect. We experience the Word of God as Law as well as Gospel. The Law calls humans to account, accusing us of sin, and driving us to God's mercy in Christ. The Law of God continually sends us to the Gospel and to Jesus, for the Gospel gives us freely what the Law demands of us. Given the dialectic of Law and Gospel, Lutherans and Moravians agree that through the actions of Law and Gospel we are simultaneously sinners and justified. Further, we discuss within our communions the role of the Law in the life and conduct of believers. However we may debate that role of the Law within our churches, we are convinced that the Law is never a means to salvation; we rely fully on the Gospel, the grace of God in Jesus Christ. Concomitantly, our understanding of the persistence of sin leads us to the joint understanding that the realm of political, cultural and organizational structures are to be ruled and judged by God's Law. Neither Moravians nor Lutherans are utopians who expect the Kingdom of God to come through human efforts and arrangements. At the same time, we understand ourselves to be called by God to participate in society as responsible citizens and to seek justice for all persons.

In order to communicate the Gospel faithfully, Lutherans and Moravians proclaim Christ according to the Holy Scriptures. As noted in the *Ground of the Unity and the Formula of Concord*, we understand Scripture to be our guide, norm and source for teachings, practices and conduct. Because Moravians and Lutherans understand the Scripture as the normative witness to Jesus Christ for the Church, we affirm scriptural authority without being biblical literalists. We employ historical and other analytical and scholarly means to understand biblical texts and meanings. When we affirm the Reformation principle *sola Scriptura*, "Scripture alone," we mean, at the very least, that no ecclesiastical authority or pious custom can impose doctrines, actions, and attitudes on persons as conditions for their reconciliation with and salvation by God which are not clearly enjoined in the Scripture.

In summary, Lutherans and Moravians understand the Gospel to be personal and relational, expressed in human form in Jesus. He engages persons and communities, challenges and encouraging them to see, hear and follow him in discipleship. We understand that Gospel to give us freely what the Law demands of us by bringing us into fellowship with Jesus, our Savior-Shepherd. Moravians and Lutherans, then, agree with and affirm each other's understandings of the Gospel, the Scriptures, and the relationship of Law and Gospel.

## 2. Justification

Lutherans and Moravians share the same emphases and understandings of the biblical and Reformation theme of justification by faith through grace without works of the Law.<sup>11</sup> This doctrine concerns Law and Gospel as well as the role of Jesus. In this area Moravians and Lutherans are in agreement and mutual affirmation on the Reformation principles *sola gratia* (by grace alone) and *sola fide* (by faith alone). There are numerous models which are used biblically and in the Church's history to express the content of justification, yet the point is that God forgives and is reconciled with sinners not by the merits or deeds or worthiness of the sinners but solely by divine free, gracious will and action in and through Jesus Christ. The divine gift is grasped by believers who are called, enlightened, and led to faith through the Holy Spirit.

Once more, our common grounding in the Reformation and the development of the Reformation through Pietism leads Moravians and Lutherans to express themselves clearly about the graciousness of God in justifying sinners and imparting to them the Spirit through Christ. Moravians will speak in terms of the Lamb who was slain and being clothed in his righteousness. One of Zinzendorf's hymns expresses the thought and devotion:

The Saviour's blood and righteousness  
My beauty is, my glorious dress;  
Thus well-arrayed, I need not fear,  
When in his presence I appear.

The holy, spotless Lamb of God,  
Who freely gave his life and blood  
For all my numerous sins to atone,  
I for my Lord and Saviour own.

Therefore my Saviour's blood and death  
Are here the substance of my faith;  
And shall remain, when I'm called hence,  
My only hope and confidence.

Lord Jesus Christ, all praise to thee,  
That thou didst deign a man to be,  
And for each soul which thou hast made  
Hast an eternal ransom paid.

Thy incarnation, wounds and death

I will confess while I have breath,  
Till I shall see thee face to face  
Arrayed with thy righteousness.<sup>12</sup>

Historically Lutherans have tended to use a forensic model of justification in which punishment and condemnation are juxtaposed against justification. A late sixteenth century Lutheran theologian wrote that Romans 8 clearly shows

the proper and true meaning of the word "justify."...It agrees entirely with the forensic meaning, that we are absolved before the judgment of God, for Christ's sake, from the guilt of sin and from damnation, pronounced just, and received to eternal life...The Law accuses all of being under sin. Every mouth is stopped, and the whole world is made to stand guilty before God, because by the works of the Law no flesh is justified. But we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption, etc....[The] meaning of the word justify is judicial, namely that the sinner, accused by the Law of God, convicted, and subjected to the sentence of eternal damnation, fleeing in faith to the throne of grace, is absolved for Christ's sake, reckoned and declared righteous, received into grace, and accepted to eternal life."<sup>13</sup>

Both churches teach that sinners are justified by Christ through grace and are called by the Spirit to newness of life. While believers still may sin and need the accusatory use of the Law to humble them, they are nevertheless still justified. Forgiveness and renewal, mercy and transformation are inseparable. That is, forgiveness is not the terminal point of justification. Forgiveness is reception into life with God in the Church, and so leads to discipleship. Justification leads to discipleship (a distinctive Moravian theme) and the new obedience (a Lutheran term rooted in the Augsburg Confession, article 8).

To summarize: Lutherans and Moravians agree with and affirm one another's views of justification. This agreement and affirmation also includes our understanding of the Gospel.

### **3. The Sacraments**

Explorations of our respective positions concerning the sacraments are both simple and complex. The simple or uncomplicated aspect is that we agree fully on there being two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and our theologies concerning those sacraments are in harmony, perhaps total agreement. This is not surprising since the *Small Catechism* has not only been used and cherished by Lutherans but has played a significant role historically in the Moravian Church. Both of us practice infant baptism and maintain the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Complexity enters through the emphases, explications, and expectations we have in these areas. Again, there is agreement and affirmation, but not uniformity. Again, we learned from one another.

A basic, far-reaching question is why we have sacraments at all? An obvious, profound answer is, "Because Christ commanded his followers to baptize and to share the Supper." Probing the response raises several factors.

First, we are commanded to administer and participate in the sacraments because we are human beings, not disembodied spirits. We need the sacraments. They are physical means through which God addresses us with the divine message of salvation. The sacraments are the Word of God in visible, tangible, even tasteable form. That Word is so intimately conjoined to the earthly elements of water, bread and wine that these elements are bearers of God's revelation of grace to men and women. In, with, and under the physical materials is God's Word - Christ - speaking, cleansing, nourishing, and renewing his people. Because we are bodily creatures, we need the Word in physical as well as spoken form.

Second, we are commanded to administer and participate in the sacraments because we are anxious sinners. The sacraments are God's Word of reconciling assurance, mercy and hope to persons who are in despair, have troubled consciences, and realize their unworthiness. Here the sacraments are active demonstrations of God's justifying grace. While we are yet sinners, helpless to merit divine favor, and alienated from God, God comes to us. The sacraments meet us in our futility and weakness to proclaim purpose and to offer us strength. The sacraments provide us with another means by which we can know of God's faithfulness, and they are an anchor for our faith.

Third, we are commanded to administer and participate in the sacraments because we need the external forms to structure our spiritual responses. The Reformation contained movements which advocated the jettisoning of physical forms in favor of direct or unmediated revelations through persons who claimed special inspirations and insights. The sacraments keep us earth-bound, furnish us with a framework which gives us a sense of order in order for the God who created the world to approach us with saving grace in the incarnate Lord.

Fourth, we are commanded to administer and participate in the sacraments because they offer us individual and communal identities. Both baptism and Eucharist name and designate us as members of the Body of Christ and heirs of the Kingdom through Jesus. The Lord who promises to be with us in all conditions knows us by name, by our unique beings, and so incorporates us into the death and resurrection of Jesus, cleanses us from sin, reveals Christ's presence, nourishes us, assures us of forgiveness, and empowers us to new life in the Spirit. While the Word of God in its other forms also testifies of these gifts, the sacraments convey these to us through creaturely means. A corollary of the same point is that the sacraments are means by which the Holy Spirit engages us as individuals and for mission in the world.

Behind the bare commandments to baptize and to share the supper is God's promise of grace. The sacraments are the Gospel in visible form. Through the Gospel, God evokes, sustains, and nourishes the faith by which we are united with Christ and receive his salvation. Another way to express the same idea is to say that through the Gospel, God enters into a personal relationship with us. The sacraments are visible means which form and express that relationship.

Since agreement concerning the sacraments is a major issue in ecumenical discussions, it is appropriate to continue our mutual affirmations further.

#### **a. Sacrament of Baptism**

Lutherans and Moravians agree with and affirm one another's positions that through baptism we are initiated into the Church, united to Christ by the Spirit, and enter into a covenantal relationship with God and our fellow Christians. Through baptism we undertake our life journeys in God's grace and to grow in faith through the Spirit. The covenantal dimensions of baptism are stated in our liturgies. At the beginning of the sacramental rite, a Moravian officiant says:

In grace God called and chose the people of Israel and established with them a covenant: I will be your God and you will be my people. In that relationship they were to be freed from sin and become a blessing to all. Then God came to us in Jesus Christ and fulfilled that covenant for all people. Through Christ's life, death, and resurrection, God made for us a new covenant of grace....

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted baptism as the visible means of entry into the new covenant. Baptism is a gift of God. In this sacrament, through grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, we are united with Christ, are cleansed by his saving work, enter into the fellowship of the church, and are called to a life of faith and willing obedience.<sup>14</sup>

The Lutheran officiant begins,

In Holy Baptism our gracious heavenly Father liberates us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity: in the waters of Baptism we are reborn children of God and inheritors of eternal life. By water and the Holy Spirit we are made members of the Church which is the Body of Christ. As we live with him and with his people, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.<sup>15</sup>

We also share understanding baptism to involve on-going growth in the Spirit. The Lutheran minister charges the parents of infants and young children who are to be baptized:

In Christian love you have presented *these children* for Holy Baptism. You should, therefore, faithfully bring them to the services of God's house, and teach *them* the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. As *they* grow in years, you should place in their hands the Holy Scriptures and provide for their instruction in the Christian faith, that, living in the covenant of their baptism and in communion with the Church, *they* may lead godly *lives* until the day of Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup>

The Moravian minister asks:

Relying on the power of the Holy Spirit, do you promise to lead your children by prayer, instruction, and example toward that time when they can by grace confirm their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and commit themselves to the life and work of the church?<sup>17</sup>

Both rites provide for the congregation to welcome the newly baptized into the whole Church through the acclamation of the congregation.<sup>18</sup>

We noted that Moravians and Lutherans consider the rite of confirmation to be an affirmation of baptism. The respective liturgies echo the promises made by parents and sponsors at the baptism of infants and children.<sup>19</sup>

To summarize: Lutherans and Moravians agree with and affirm one another's views of the Sacrament of Baptism.

## **b. Sacrament of Communion**

Moravians and Lutherans agree that Jesus calls the community of believers to be a communion in the Spirit, united in love, and sent to serve. Further, we agree that the Sacrament celebrates this communion, strengthens the bonds of mutual relationships, and promises that God will be with us as we live in the world. Still further, we agree that the Eucharist is "for you and for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given to us in the sacrament, for where there is forgiveness of sins, there are also life and salvation." (*Small Catechism*, VI).

From the 16th to the present century Lutherans have engaged in significant intra-church and ecumenical debates which have centered in the "Real Presence" of Christ in, with, and under the forms of bread and wine. The concerns expressed include whether or not there is a change of substance in the elements, the relation of ordained ministers to the Eucharist, the natures of the Christ who is present, whether the grace of God is diminished by stressing the recipients' faith, and communing with and/or under the auspices of Christians who do not hold the same theological views. Moravians, wary of past polemics and aware of the need for humans to be humble when describing God's ways, appreciate the concerns involved in discussing Christ's presence. Lutherans and Moravians agreed that in the Lord's Supper, Christ gives his body and blood according to his promise to all who partake of the elements. When we eat and drink the bread and the wine of the Supper with expectant faith, we thereby have communion with the body and blood of our Lord, and receive the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. In this sense, the bread and wine are rightly said to be Christ's body and blood which he gives to his disciples. We are united with Jesus in the Supper and with one another in the fellowship of his body, and we enjoy a foretaste of the great marriage feast of the Lamb. We joyfully confess the mystery of the Lord's Supper in the faith that the love of Christ knows no limits, acknowledging that no human theory can fully or finally account for it.

As anticipated, Moravian liturgies indicate the breadth and depth of their understandings of communion. This may be seen in the Unity's having not one general communion liturgy but four. Each of the four reflects distinct themes correlated to the Church Year.<sup>20</sup> As anticipated, congregational singing and an emphasis on the relationship of the worshipers to one another are prominent. The opening rubric of all the communion services is "The congregation gives the right hand of fellowship, signifying oneness in Christ and the desire to be at peace with one another." The hymn which follows the handshake of peace in the communion liturgies for "Celebration of Christ's Coming" and "Celebration of the Resurrection" illustrates well the twin themes of the unity of believers and the covenantal relationship with God in Christ:

We covenant with hand and heart to follow Christ our Lord;  
with world, and sin, and self to part, and to obey his word;

to love each other heartily, in truth and with sincerity,  
and under cross, reproach, and shame, to glorify his name.<sup>21</sup>

The Moravian concern is not for the mode or extent of Christ's presence; they understand that Jesus is fully present with his promises and gifts in manners which God determines and actualizes through the Spirit. A distinctive Moravian contribution is the emphasis on the covenantal unity shared by God, the individual, the local fellowship of believers, and the whole Body of Christ. One hymn in the communion liturgy for atonement expresses it well for both Lutherans and Moravians:<sup>22</sup>

Own your congregation, gracious Paschal Lamb;  
we are here assembled in your holy name;  
look upon your people whom you by your blood  
have in love redeemed and brought nigh to God.

You have kindly led us through our joys and tears;  
now accept our praises and remove our fears.  
Grant us all with gladness to obey your voice;  
let your will and pleasure be our only choice.

May your church arrayed in the glorious dress  
of the Lord and Savior's spotless righteousness,  
be both now and forever by your blood kept clean,  
and in all its members may your grace be seen.

To summarize: Moravians and Lutherans agree with and affirm one another's understandings of the Sacrament of Communion

The Mutual Affirmations indicate diversity within our agreements, yet the affirmations are extensive, profound, and unforced. Our summary of the summaries at this point is that Lutherans and Moravians agree with and affirm one another's understandings of the Gospel and Sacraments

<sup>10</sup> *Augsburg Confession*, VI. Our liturgies reflect these views with remarkable similarities. *The Moravian Book of Worship* (Bethlehem and Winston-Salem: The Moravian Church in America, 1995) reflects phrasings which appear also in the *Lutheran Book Of Worship* (Minneapolis and Philadelphia: Augsburg Publishing House and Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1978). Our churches share the following almost verbatim: "Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry, and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen." (*Moravian Book Of Worship*, General Liturgy 3, pg. 21). See *Lutheran Book Of Worship*, "Most merciful God, we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on

us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen." (pgs. 56, repeated on pgs. 77 and 98.)

The dialoguers recognized that the biblical themes we used varied not in content but proportion. Moravians tend to look first to the life of Jesus as presented in the Gospel of John, and then they move toward the Pauline writings. Lutherans realized they usually began with Paul, especially the epistles to the Galatians, Romans and Ephesians. Both Lutherans and Moravians rely substantially on the Fourth Gospel for understanding Jesus as the Word of God.

<sup>11</sup> A current theological discussion deals with the nuances of stating the principle as "justification by faith through grace" and "justification by grace through faith." The dialoguers did not enter discussions on that issue. For the sake of consistency and without making a commitment on either side of the question, this report uses "justification by faith through grace."

<sup>12</sup> The hymn is 327 in the 1969 *Hymnal of the Moravian Church*. A modernized translation is in the new *Moravian Book of Worship* (Hymn 776) and a portion is used in one of the communion rituals (pg. 201). The "dress of righteousness" reflects Luther's view of the righteousness of God which is "alien" to humanity, see Luther's sermon on "The Two Kinds of Righteousness," (LW volume 31, pgs. 293-306.). Note also in the *Lutheran Service Book and Hymnal*, 376 in which verses 2-4 are by Zinzendorf and express the same ideas.

<sup>13</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Examination Of The Council Of Trent*, Part 1, translated by Fred Kramer, St. Louis: Concordia, 1971, pgs. 473-474. Melanchthon also used the juridical or forensic model, Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article 4, section 304-305.

<sup>14</sup> *Moravian Book Of Worship*, pg. 165.

<sup>15</sup> *Lutheran Book Of Worship*, pg. 121.

<sup>16</sup> *Lutheran Book Of Worship*, pg. 121.

<sup>17</sup> *Moravian Book Of Worship*, pg. 166.

<sup>18</sup> See *Lutheran Book Of Worship*, pgs. 124f and the *Moravian Book Of Worship*, pg. 169. In the Moravian liturgy the acclamation is through a hymn of welcome which also includes the motif of growth in grace and the congregation's pledge of love.

<sup>19</sup> *Moravian Book Of Worship*, pgs. 170-174 and the *Lutheran Book Of Worship*, pgs. 198- 201.

<sup>20</sup> The four themes are In Celebration of Christ's Coming, of the Atonement, of the Resurrection, and of the Holy Spirit. There are seven "General Liturgies." (General, Reconciliation, Adoration, Creation, Grace, Discipleship, and Celebration). A series of other liturgies related to the liturgical calendar and a number of topical liturgies in addition to a cluster of occasional services complete the roster of liturgies. The Lutheran liturgical tradition reflected in the *Lutheran Book Of Worship* has three different musical settings of what is basically the same service, Holy Communion, a number of formats tied to the times of worship (e.g., morning and evening prayer,

compline), other types of services (e.g., Service of the Word, Responsive Prayer, etc.), and some occasional services.

<sup>21</sup> The hymn "In Celebration of the Atonement" is:

Come, then, come, O flock of Jesus, covenant with him anew;  
unto him, who conquered for us, pledge we love and service true;  
let our mutual love be glowing; thus will the world plainly see  
that we, as on one stem growing, living branches are in thee.

The hymn "In Celebration of the Holy Spirit" is:

I come with joy to meet my Lord, forgiven loved, and free;  
in awe and wonder to recall his life laid down for me.  
As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud division ends;  
the love that made us, makes us one, and strangers now are friends.

<sup>22</sup> *Moravian Book Of Worship*, pg. 205.

## IV. C. Mutual Complementarities

A complement is neither a compliment nor a supplement. The former praises while the latter appends something related but different to the original. A complement completes an idea or position, moves a discussion or practice toward consummation, expands on what is already present so that the original reaches toward wholeness. Throughout the dialogue, Lutherans and Moravians recognized and discovered complementarities. Sometimes those complementarities were related to our methods and forms of expressing our positions and perspectives. In those instances one partner discerned that what we said in our separate ways could be enriched by listening to the other's agreement with and expansion of the statement and practice. At other times the position of one illumined a theme which the other had de-emphasized over time, thereby encouraging both to recover and consider cultivating what was present. On still other occasions, we informed one another of problems which our respective traditions had encountered but which could be seen now, with the assistance and prodding of the other to be valued and helpful in our present contexts. Our reciprocal and mutual searching for and finding moved us to appreciate our respective teachings and practices while we deepened our progress toward recommending that our churches establish full communion with each other.

Three areas of complementarities are tightly linked to one another, our methods, and Affirmations. Moreover, each involves the Holy Spirit's involvement with the believer, the Church, and ministry. The three areas are:

1. the Holy Spirit, the Believer and the Christian Life;
2. the Holy Spirit in the Church; and

### 3. Our Churches' Ministry and Polity.

A preliminary comment is in order. While our respective bodies would benefit from thorough examinations and expositions of our understandings about and experiences of the Holy Spirit, this report is limited in scope and purpose. Our joint grounding in the Bible provides us with a wealth of images, ideas, learnings, and perspectives on the interactions of the Spirit within the Godhead, humanity, nature, history, the Church, believers, and the consummation of all existence. Moravians and Lutherans believe, teach, and confess faith in the Triune God in terms which are recognized and confirmed throughout the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Because both churches have had to respond to significant challenges related to the Spirit, each is cautious, perhaps overly so, when discussing the Spirit's roles in revelation, the lives of individual believers, and the witness of the whole Church. In the present, however, Christians in many communions are overcoming their anxieties related to the Spirit, and are recognizing as well as recovering positive and creative emphases about the Spirit.

Among the texts Moravians and Lutherans share is the Explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed in Luther's *Small Catechism*:<sup>23</sup>

I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant eternal life to me and all who believe in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

Several articles of another commonly held document, the Augsburg Confession, express the same views.<sup>24</sup> The Catechism's statement presupposes the positions and ambiguities developed by the Church over the centuries concerning issues such as the substance, persons, begottenness of the Son, procession of the Spirit, and others related to the Godhead. These matters have never been at issue between Lutherans and Moravians. Likewise, the Explanation does not deal with a number of important areas involving the Spirit, e.g., creation, providence, and wisdom. These may be explored fruitfully in other and subsequent venues.

#### **1. The Holy Spirit, the Believer and the Christian Life**

The Catechism's Explanations of the first and second articles of the Creed open with the believer's awareness of God's loving care for the person and conclude with the Christian's looking forward in trust and joy to serving the Creator and Redeemer. The central sections of the initial two Explanations present humans as totally helpless to undertake any actions which deserve or merit divine favor, while God is praised for the gifts and assurances which provide for temporal and eternal life.<sup>25</sup> Luther's Third Explanation, however, provides an energy and coherence for the article which can be seen retrospectively as crucial for the other two articles and which extends into the believer's faith, deeds, and relationships. That energy and coherence

engage Lutherans and Moravians in agreeing and complementing one another's faith and practice. To illumine our complementarities in this area, we present three points concerning the Spirit's relationship with individual believers which grow out of the following:

1. all persons need the Spirit in order to come to faith in Christ;
2. Christians still need the Spirit to admonish and call them to repentance even though they are justified; and
3. the Spirit is the source and power of sanctification in the life of the believer.

First, although language expressing justification by faith is not used directly, justification, as Moravians and Lutherans affirm it, suffuses and shapes the Explanation's views of humans and Jesus. Parenthetically, that a forensic or other mode of expressing justification is not used here points to the realization that justification is not and cannot be limited to one or another mode. Yet the Catechism takes us deeper. It insists that only through the Spirit can one believe in or come to Jesus as her or his Lord and Savior.

Here as elsewhere, Lutherans underscore justification through grace, whatever the mode or metaphor, deriving their understandings from Pauline, Augustinian and Reformation sources. These sources stress the sovereignty of God's power to save, and that God's will to save through grace is mediated via the Spirit. Lutherans recognize that there is no other way for us to enter a saving relationship with God except through God's action. The Spirit is that Person of the Trinity through whom we know Christ and the Creator. Moreover, the Spirit generates in us the faith needed to grasp the grace offered so that we may come to Christ and the Maker of all. Lutherans regard justification as "the main doctrine of Christianity...[which] when properly understood, it illumines and magnifies the honor of Christ and brings to pious consciences the abundant consolation that they need."<sup>26</sup> There can be no doubt or compromise, Lutherans claim, about the clarity and certainty that we are justified by faith alone without works of the Law as a gift of God's grace in Christ.<sup>27</sup> Certainly, Lutherans understand justification to be on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, so that through his death and resurrection we have both the promises and the reality of the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. Indeed, the "Gospel is, strictly speaking, the promise of forgiveness of sins and justification because of Christ."<sup>28</sup> And all these "benefits" of Christ are given through the Spirit.

The Lutheran expression of the point that all persons need the Spirit in order to come to faith in Christ has a sonority and passionate logic borne of the heat of debates and controversies in the sixteenth and subsequent centuries - and which are still current today. While not losing sight of the incarnate Lord, Lutherans are determined to express their views of the Spirit, justification, and the Christian life in terms which deny any hint of works righteousness or human merit which might prompt God's favor. Relying on Pauline terms and their Reformation heritage, Lutherans see and listen to contemporary society, including church life, as prone to both works righteousness and a careless sentimentality about God's love. A Lutheran contribution and complement at this juncture is a staunch insistence on justification as an unmerited gift from God through the Spirit.

The Moravian perspective complements the Lutheran view. Moravians highlight justification as the believer entering a personal relationship with Jesus through the Spirit. The Unity agrees fully

that justification is by faith, apart from works of the Law, and recognizes justification as a God-given assurance that the person belongs to and in Jesus. In other words, while recognizing justification as a core doctrine, Moravians express their understanding of it more naturally as God's gracious invitation for a person to walk with the Savior. This fits with the Catechism Explanation's consistent use of the personal pronouns "I, me, and mine." The Spirit is the Person of the Trinity who sheds God's grace abroad in the hearts of men and women so that they come to trust in, depend upon, and live in fellowship with one another as they follow Jesus. The *Ground of the Unity*, in a passage cited earlier, states that each individual is called personally and is led to a recognition of her or his sin, culminating in accepting the redemption achieved by Christ. The Spirit "effects living belief in the hearts of individuals."<sup>29</sup> There is no room here, either, for works righteousness or human pride. Again, a hymn expresses it well:

Faith is a living power from heaven  
that grasps the promise that God has giv'n,  
a trust that cant be overthrown  
fixed heartily on Christ alone.

Faith finds in Christ our every need  
to save or strengthen us indeed;  
we now receive that grace sent down,  
which makes us share his cross and crown.

Faith in the conscience works for peace,  
and bids the mourner's weeping cease,  
by faith the children's place we claim,  
and give all honor to one name.

We thank you, then, O God of heav'n,  
that you to us this faith have given  
In Jesus Christ your Son, who is  
our only fount and source of bliss.<sup>30</sup>

The Moravian experience of the Spirit in the life of the believer was not shaped by the polemics of the Reformation but by the Brethren's endurance in the Ancient Church, the "period of the hidden seed," its renewal in Continental Pietism, and its internal struggles to be faithful to the power of the Spirit and the need for witnessing to Christ as individuals and as a community. Especially under the influence of continental Pietism the *Unitas Fratrum* came to depict the Christian life as a pilgrimage with Jesus as the Leader and Companion through joys and sorrows. The journey's goal, whether called heaven or salvation, was undertaken humbly and gratefully with the Lord in the Spirit. Zinzendorf's hymn, also used by Lutherans, puts justification through grace in terms of that journey:

Jesus, still lead on till our rest be won;  
and although the way be cheerless, we will follow calm and fearless;  
guide us by your hand to the promised land.

If the way be drear, if the foe be near,  
let no faithless fears o'ertake us, let not faith and hope forsake us;  
safely past the foe to our home we go.

When we seek relief from a long-felt grief,  
when temptations come alluring, make us patient and enduring;  
show us that bright shore where we weep no more.

Jesus, still lead on till our rest be won;  
heav'nly leader still direct us, still support, console, protect us,  
still we safely stand in the promised land.<sup>31</sup>

Moravians and Lutherans complement each other in agreeing on the point of the need for the Spirit in engendering faith through our central affirmation on justification through grace by means of the Spirit. Lutherans seek to maintain the grace of God bestowed through the Spirit against any shadow of human works and worth. The Unity endeavors to insure that the believer realizes that justification opens a gracious relationship with Jesus by means of the Spirit. Clearly we need both dimensions in understanding the wonder and grace of God.

The second point is that it is impossible for anyone to claim that a person's faith, devotion, and experiences of God are due to human worthiness or effort in any measure at all. A believer becomes a believer only through the Spirit; and so a person is totally dependent upon God for belief, piety, and good works. The radical nature of human helplessness before God asserts divine sovereignty in salvation, but that sovereignty is recognized and realized through the Spirit who testifies to and applies the grace of Christ in and for humans. In and through the Spirit, a lost and condemned creature's heart and mind are strengthened and enlightened to recognize God's redemptive action in Jesus. Faith is the result of the Spirit's gracious action; without the Spirit, there can be no saving relationship with Jesus. The person who affirms, "This is most certainly true" can make that statement in faith because the Spirit has led and inspired the individual to confess the truth about the Truth, and then to walk on the Way through resurrection, and to abide with God just as Christ and the Father abide together.

Nevertheless, although declared righteous through Christ, the justified person is still a sinner. She or he cannot assume that now good works will earn further care or favor from God. The Spirit's dual function of accuser and comforter applies to the Christian. Through the Spirit, the believer becomes acutely conscious of both the depths of one's sin and the immensity of God's love bestowed through Christ. The Spirit both troubles and calms the believer's conscience. Christians are driven repeatedly to God's mercy in Jesus. They know that they have been redeemed not with silver or gold but with Jesus' innocent sufferings and death. Each day the believer realizes that the Spirit searches the depths of human hearts and each day forgives sins so that the person "may be Christ's and live under him" and "serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness."

The Moravian complement, as anticipated, looks toward Jesus. He is the suffering yet triumphant Lamb, the crucified and forgiving Lord. His sin-healing wounds and blood present the objective reality of God's reconciling love for humanity. Especially through the influence of Pietism as

developed by Zinzendorf, the Renewed Unity affirms that centrality of the cross which eliminates any ground for human worthiness or pride. Paradoxically, the Savior's pain and death turn the believer not toward gloom and guilt but to an ever fuller and more joyful dependence on God's grace and love. One of Christian Renatus Zinzendorf's hymns conveys the follower's heartfelt devotion to and hope in Jesus:

My Redeemer, overwhelmed with anguish, went to Olivet for me;  
there he kneels, his heart does heave and languish in a bitter agony;  
fear and horror seize his soul and senses,  
for the hour of darkness now commences;  
ah, how he does weep and groan our rebellion to atone.

Could our hearts and voices then join forces in exalted songs to raise;  
yet, till joined to the celestial chorus, cold would prove our warmest praise;  
Jesus love exceeds all comprehension,  
but our love to him we scarce dare mention;  
we may weep beneath his cross, but he wept and bled for us.

Lamb of God, you shall remain forever of our songs the only theme;  
for your boundless love, your grace and favor, we will praise your saving name;  
that for our transgressions you were wounded  
shall by us in nobler strains be sounded,  
when we, perfected in love, once shall join the church above.<sup>32</sup>

The Lutheran complement on the impossibility for humans to claim they are worthy of God's grace at any time may be seen clearly in terms of the Word of God as Law and Gospel. The Law continues to apply to the regenerate because of the persistence of the Old Adam even among those justified by faith. The condemnatory use of the Law drives the Christian away from any security based on human works or worthiness, and urges the believer to cling to God's grace in Christ more fervently. Christ is the "mirror of the Father's heart" apart from whom "we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge." The Law is the mirror "in which the will of God and what is pleasing to him is correctly portrayed." The Spirit employs the Law to teach, admonish, warn, threaten and punish Christians, "egging them on so that they may follow the Spirit of God." Lutherans are acutely aware that while the "perfect obedience of Christ covers" the sins of Christians" so that [those sins] are not reckoned to believers for damnation, and although the Holy Spirit has begun the mortification of the Old Adam and their renewal in the spirit of their minds, nevertheless the Old Adam still clings to their nature and to all its internal and external powers."<sup>33</sup>

This point of complementarity may be summarized from the Moravian perspective as a concentration on Jesus' passion which binds believers to a personal engagement with the incarnate Word of God who truly suffered and died in giving himself for sinners. In this engagement, the Christian is drawn by the Spirit to follow the Lord humbly and thankfully. The Lutheran complement hews closely to the Law-Gospel construction which Lutherans hold is important in discerning God's will. The Lutheran contribution aids in avoiding a cloying

attachment to a helpless Christ while presenting God's gracious action with intensity and clarity. Again, Lutherans and Moravians gain from one another.

The third point of complementarity under consideration deals with the continual presence and activity of the Spirit within the believer; justification is inseparable from sanctification, and sanctification leads the person into fuller awareness of God's justifying sinners by faith through grace, and calling them to live according to their calling to holiness and eternal life. A Christian is called, enlightened, sanctified, and preserved in the true faith. The person who is declared justified, who is dressed in the righteousness of Christ, is nevertheless still a sinner. The sanctifying task of the Spirit is to lead, guide, admonish, strengthen, and, when needed, expose the believer in the believer's growth in grace. Here the Catechism prepares for the Catechism's Explanation to the Lord's Prayer and foreshadows the Augsburg Confession's Article 6:

[In response to the Prayer's second petition] To be sure, the Kingdom of God comes of itself, without our prayer, but we pray in this petition that it may also come to us...[T]he heavenly Father gives us his Holy Spirit so that by his grace we may believe his holy Word and live a godly life, both here in time and hereafter forever.

[Article 6's traditional title is "The New Obedience"] It is also taught among us that such faith should produce good fruits and good works and that we must do all such good works as God has commanded, but we should do them for God's sake and not place our trust in them as if thereby to merit favor before God. For we receive forgiveness of sin and righteousness through faith.

While faith may be construed as accepting right or orthodox doctrines, the Reformation meaning is far more powerful. In a passage cherished by Moravians and Lutherans alike, Luther wrote:

Faith, however, is a divine work in us which changes us and makes us to be born anew of God... It kills the old Adam and makes us altogether different men, in heart and spirit and mind and powers; and it brings with it the Holy Spirit. O it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. It is impossible for it not to be doing good works incessantly.... Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that the believer would stake his life on it a thousand times. This knowledge of and confidence in God's grace makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and with all creatures. And this is the work which the Holy Spirit performs in faith.<sup>34</sup>

The work of the Spirit may be quiet, steady and gradual. And the Spirit may engender boldness, joy, and confidence. The Spirit's work in the believer's life may be seen in a person's works and words. It may also be felt in the Christian's heart as a warmth, openness and acceptance generated by trusting that the Spirit seals what Christ has won for our salvation.

Lutherans and Moravians agree fully that the Spirit is active in the life of the believer in ways which lead to the individual's growth in grace. Growth in the Spirit is also growth in the grace which assures us of forgiveness, strengthens us to do God's will, emboldens us to witness to Christ, and draws us ever-closer to God and the members of the Body of Christ. Lutherans, wary of any signs that justification by faith through grace might be compromised, are equally concerned that a legalistic view of human conduct will assert itself. Lutherans are aware that

legalism leads to a tyranny over conscience and action, even when advocated for the sake of God's will. The Gospel offers freedom through which the Spirit moves Christians to just and compassionate decisions and deeds. Experience with distortions in pietism and orthodoxy as well as tendencies in North American society legitimate such concerns. In addition, Lutherans are still debating among themselves the role of the Law in the life of the believer. Nonetheless and by whatever means the Spirit may employ, Lutherans agree that we grow in grace through the Spirit. Luther wrote,

Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him and take him as our Lord, unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit. The work is finished and completed, Christ has acquired and won the treasure for us by his sufferings, death and resurrection, etc. But if the work remained hidden and no one knew of it, it would have been all in vain, all lost. In order that this treasure might not be buried but put to use and enjoyed, God has caused the Word to be published and proclaimed, in which he has given the Holy Spirit to offer and apply to us this treasure of salvation. Therefore to sanctify is nothing else than to bring us to the Lord Christ to receive this blessing, which we could not obtain by ourselves.<sup>35</sup>

The Lutheran Order for Baptism reflects "By water and the Holy Spirit we are made members of the Church, which is the body of Christ. As we live with him and with his people, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God." Parents promise to provide the external means through which children are brought into regular contact with the Christian community and the means of grace, "that, living in the covenant of their baptism and in communion with the Church, they may lead godly lives until the day of Jesus Christ."<sup>36</sup> In the Rite of Confirmation, a person affirms the promises made at baptism, and the whole assembly gives its "amen" to the prayer

Gracious Lord, through water and the Spirit you have made these *men and women* your own. You forgave them all their sins and brought them to newness of life. Continue to strengthen them with the Holy Spirit, and daily increase in them your gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.<sup>37</sup>

Moravians recognize the risks of legalism and crypto-works righteousness. They, too, realize that humans have a knack for binding one another's consciences in subtle as well as blatant ways. While acknowledging the need to be as clear as possible about the differences between Law and Gospel, the Unity construes sanctification in terms of the Holy Spirit's leading the believer to a closer relationship with Jesus. Indeed, the motif of the Christian life as a journey with God in the Spirit is reflected in the Confirmation liturgy. The candidate who affirms her or his baptism is exhorted by the presiding minister, "By affirming your baptismal covenant in public worship today, you have taken another step in your journey with God. You have entered into a new relationship with God and this congregation. We charge you in God's name always to remain faithful to Christ and the church, and to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit."<sup>38</sup>

The Unitas Fratrum's motto, "Our Lamb has conquered. Let us follow him," is reflected in the Moravian willingness to share with other's ones *Lebenslauf*, that is, story of one's life-faith journey. The *Lebenslauf* is a thoughtful, self-searching examination of events, and thoughts,

influences and experiences in which the person humbly seeks to discern in his or her life the presence, guidance, admonition, and blessings of Christ through the Spirit.

The mutual complementarities in the field of sanctification are helpful to Moravians and Lutherans. Lutherans emphasize caution regarding legalism and works righteousness, yet they realize that Christians grow in trusting, understanding, and obeying God through the Spirit. Moravians offer the motif of the journey as a way of expressing that growth in grace and a personal engagement with God which also leads to fellowship with others.

We move now to our complementarities on the Holy Spirit and the believer in the Church.

## **2. The Holy Spirit and Believers in the Church**

The Christian community, extended in space around the globe and throughout time from the New Testament times to the end of the age, is the normal and natural locus for the Spirit's activity. Many biblical images are used to describe that community such as called-out assembly (*ekklesia*), disciples of the Lord, Body of Christ, new Israel, Bride of Christ, and household of faith. The "Followers of the Way" also understood themselves as the branches and Jesus the vine, as sheep who followed the Good Shepherd, friends of Jesus, brothers and sisters in the Lord, and saints - in spite of definitely unsaintly conduct. Often Christians applied to themselves descriptions of ancient Israel, such as royal priesthood, holy nation, faithful remnant, and covenant people. The richness and fluidity of terms indicates a wealth of concepts and self-understandings. Whatever expression or image Christians have used to describe themselves, they have understood themselves as united in Christ through the Holy Spirit. and they also understood that their God-created and led community was part of God's plan for the salvation of all. We can expect these ideas and images to appear among Lutherans and Moravians. We consider several common and foundational agreements shared by Moravians and Lutherans.

Both agree with the Augsburg Confession's understanding of the Church, Articles VII and VIII:

VII. It is taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered according to the Gospel. For it is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian church that the Gospel be preached in conformity with a pure understanding of it and that the sacraments be administered in accordance with the Divine Word. It is not necessary for the true unity of the Christian church that ceremonies, instituted by men, should be observed uniformly in all places....

VIII. Again, although the Christian church, properly speaking, is nothing else than the assembly of all believers and saints, yet because in this life many false Christians, hypocrites, and even open sinners remain among the godly, the sacraments are efficacious even if the priests who administer them are wicked men....

When these positions are joined to the Explanation of the Third Article in the Small Catechism, Lutherans and Moravians realize that they have great freedom in structuring rites, church organization, and seeking fellowship with other believers whose positions and practices may

differ in form. They also realize that it is the substance of the Gospel which is the center of faith, fellowship, and function. Further, the Explanation puts the whole Church and its specific manifestations under the guidance, enlightenment and judgment of the Spirit. Here freedom is placed in the context of faithfulness to the Triune God. Our ways of expressing the Spirit's presence and action in the Church both complement and encourage us to pursue further conversations and considerations.<sup>39</sup>

Historical experiences move Moravians to consider carefully and boldly the nature of the Church universal and the Unity in particular. At the same time their historic commitments cause them to cultivate close harmony among their members as well as to be willing to engage in mission-oriented and ecumenical ventures. The dialoguers concluded that an exposition of some Moravian perspectives on the complement "The Holy Spirit and Believers in the Church" will be helpful for mutual understanding. The *Ground Of The Unity* provides reference markers: a) the source, aim and end of the Unity's being; b) the *Unitas Fratrum* as a unity and the Church as a fellowship; and c) the Church as a community serving the neighbor and the world.

First and foremost, the opening of the *Ground*:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ calls His church into being so that it may serve Him on earth until He comes. The *Unitas Fratrum* is, therefore, aware of its being called in faith to serve mankind by proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It recognizes this call to be the source of its being and the inspiration of its service. As is the source, so is the aim and end of its being based on the will of its Lord.<sup>40</sup>

By situating the Unity within the Church so as to hear Jesus continually call the whole Christian community into existence in order to serve him, Moravians retain the dynamic understanding of member communities sharing with one another a unity which transcends doctrinal and liturgical differences and which empowers those communities to join their distinctive witnesses in serving the Lord who serves all humankind. Given its self-understanding that it is among those ecclesial communities called especially to proclaim the Gospel, Moravians seek to listen to the Spirit's urgings and leadings as to how the *Unitas Fratrum* is to answer the call addressed to it. Other communities may be led and equipped with the Spirit's gifts to other forms of service and witness. Moravians hear the Spirit especially summoning them to present to the Church and the world the Gospel so as to engage children, men and women in personal relationships with God, a faithful walk with the Savior, and a vibrant community in the Spirit. Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg's hymn expresses it well:

The church of Christ which he has hallowed here to be his house,  
is scattered far and near, in north, and south, and east, and west abroad;  
and yet in earth and heav'n, thro' Christ her Lord, the church is one.

One member may not know another here, and yet their fellowship is true and near;  
one is their Savior, and their Father one; one Spirit rules them,  
and among them none lives to one's self.

They live to him who bought them with his blood,

baptized them with his Spirit, pure and good; and in true faith and ever-burning love, their hearts and hopes ascend to seek above the'ternal good.

O Spirit of the Lord, all life is yours;  
now on your church your pow'r and strength out-pour, that many children may be born to you,  
and through your knowledge may be brought anew to sing Christ's praise.<sup>41</sup>

For Moravians, the Church certainly has external marks such as the Word rightly preached and the sacraments properly administered. Still, the primary constitutive factor is the relationship which God establishes with the Church and its believers in Christ through the Spirit. As the Triune God is the only source of life and salvation, according to the Ground, section 4, so the source of the Church's being and mission is the same Trinity. The Ancient Moravian Church described the relationship between the Church and God in terms of the triad faith, love and hope.

Emphasis on relationship takes flesh and blood form. The faith-love-hope which exists between God and an individual creates a communal relationship among persons. As the crucified Lord gave his mother and his beloved disciple to each other (John 19:25-27), so God brings persons together that they may share life together in Christ's community. The Church, as Moravians describe it, is the fellowship of followers gathered around the cross. And as there can be no Christianity without the cross, there can be no Church without Christ at its center, and no Christianity without the community of believers called the Church. As Spangenberg put it, the Church is scattered but one, a fellowship because of what its members share: the Triune God. The special role of Jesus as Head or Chief Elder of the Church derives from this position, as will be indicated shortly. A distinctive Moravian complementarity in this instance is the Moravian conception of the Church as called into being by God, being given the broad mission to proclaim the Gospel in fellowship with communities within the Church, and linking the Church in its manifold forms in an intimate union with the Triune God so that the Church is a human community sharing Christ's Gospel with the whole of humanity.

The second reference marker develops the Church as a fellowship and the Moravian Church as a unity within that fellowship. Sections 6 and 7 of the *Ground Of The Unity* provide the reference mark:

6. We believe in and confess the unity of the church given in the one Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. 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.

The *Unitas Fratrum* espoused such unity when it took over the name of the Old Bohemian Brethren's Church "*Unitas Fratrum*" (Unity of the Brethren). Nor can we ever forget the powerful unifying experience granted by the crucified and risen Lord to our fathers in Herrnhut on the occasion of the Holy Communion of August 13, 1727, in Berthelsdorf.

It is the Lord's will that Christendom should give evidence of and seek unity in Him with zeal and love. In our own midst we see how such unity has been promised us and laid upon us as a charge. We recognize that through the grace of Christ different churches have received many gifts. It is our desire that we may learn from each other and rejoice together in the riches of the

love of Christ and the manifold wisdom of God.

We confess our share in the guilt which is manifest in the severed and divided state of Christendom. By means of such divisions we ourselves hinder the message and power of the Gospel. We recognize the danger of self-righteousness and judging others without love.

Since we together with all Christians are pilgrims on the way to meet our coming Lord, we welcome every step that brings us nearer the goal of unity in Him. He Himself invites us to communion in His supper. Through it He leads the Church toward that union which he has promised. By means of His presence in the Holy Communion He makes our unity with Him evident and certain even today.

7. The Church of Jesus Christ, despite all the distinctions between male and female, Jew and non-Jew, white and colored, poor and rich, is one in its Lord. The Unitas Fratrum recognizes no distinction between those who are one in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are called to testify that God in Jesus Christ brings His people out of "every race, kindred and tongue" into one body, pardons sinners beneath the Cross and brings them together. We oppose any discrimination in our midst because of race or standing, and we regard it as a commandment of the Lord to bear public witness to this and to demonstrate by word and deed that we are brothers and sisters in Christ.

The aim of the Church in proclaiming the Gospel is to unite all persons in Christ and with one another. The Moravian community within the Church is to strive for that unity in a three-fold manner:

1. through mission endeavors directed toward those who are not yet believers;
2. through ecumenical partnerships and sharing with other Christian communities; and
3. through providing the world and the Church with a witness of Christian concord and fellowship manifested in the Unity itself.

In concept and practice, the Unity's testimony of the reality of oneness in Christ through its congregational and denominational life provides the energy for its ecumenical and missionary ministries. And a vibrant sense of God's presence in Christ through the Spirit is the heart of the Moravian Church's unity. Moravian commitments to the unity of the whole Church, then, are basic to Moravian self-understandings of their Unity and the Church universal.

The Unity knows that oneness in Christ and in their own ranks is neither to be taken for granted nor is it without cost. The Ground's reference to the experience of August 13, 1727, is an admission to the world and subsequent generations in the Renewed Church that they have been tested with divisions and disagreements. In a time of crisis over leadership, direction and the challenge of mission, and after considerable debate and prayer, and in the context of a Lutheran-led Eucharist, the fellowship was deeply moved by what has come to be called the Moravian Pentecost. The members experienced the reality of the Spirit working among them to unite them in spite of different opinions and reasonings. The oneness they shared in the Spirit, members realized, was to be expressed in harmonious love and peace as they lived as a community and as individuals to do God's will. Ever since, August 13 is a cherished day among Moravians. It is a time to recall the events at Berthelsdorf with humility and joy, and to commit themselves anew to their mission to be involved in promoting the unity of the whole Church. A later hymn catches

the experience and expresses the Unity's dedication to oneness in Christ, the *Unitas Fratrum*, and the Church:

They walked with God in peace and love but failed with one another;  
while sternly for the faith they strove, they fell out with each other.  
But he in whom they put their trust, who knew their frames,  
that they were dust, with pity healed their weakness.

He found them in his house of prayer with one accord assembled,  
and so revealed his presence there, they wept for joy and trembled.  
One cup they drank, one bread they broke, one baptism shared,  
one language spoke, forgiving and forgiven.

Then forth they went, with tongues of flame in one blessed theme delighting;  
the love of Jesus and his name, God's children all uniting.  
That love our theme and watch-word still; the law of love may we fulfill -  
give love as love we're given.<sup>42</sup>

The Moravian "Love Feast" is another means through which congregations enhance and witness to their fellowship. As indicated, poetry, hymnody and music are used along with history to manifest the Unity's thought, devotion and practice. The Love Feast has developed into a distinctive form through which a congregation and groups of congregations come together. The forms of the service may differ, but the intent is the same. Although marriages, congregational celebrations, and traditional ways to mark the seasons of the Church Year may be the stipulated occasions, the members gather for singing hymns and listening to special presentations of choral music. The unity afforded through joint listening and common singing is increased through a simple sharing of a bun and a cup of coffee during the musical offering. While the Love Feast is not a sacrament per se, it has the character and climate of a fellowship meal in which the Spirit unites the hearts, minds and voices of the community.

The third reference marker moves the *Unitas Fratrum* to understand the whole Church and itself as engaged in being a community of service to those near and far. The reference marker is the Ground's sections 8, 9, and 10:

8. Jesus Christ came not to be served but to serve. From this, His Church receives its mission and power for its service, to which each of its members is called. We believe that the Lord has called us particularly to mission service among the peoples of the world. In this, and in all others forms of service both at home and abroad, to which the Lord commits us, He expects us to confess Him and witness to His love in unselfish service.

9. Our Lord Jesus entered this world's misery in order to bear it and overcome it. We seek to follow Him in serving His brethren. Like the love of Jesus, this service knows no bounds. Therefore we pray the Lord ever anew to point out to us the way to reach our neighbor, opening our heart and hand to him in his need.

10. Jesus Christ maintains in love and faithfulness His commitment to this fallen world.

Therefore we must remain concerned for this world. We may not withdraw from it through indifference, pride or fear. Together with the universal Christian Church, the Unitas Fratrum challenges mankind with the message of the love of God, striving to promote the peace of the world and seeking to attain what is best for all men. For the sake of this world, the Unitas Fratrum hopes for and looks to the day when the victory of Christ will be manifest over sin and death and the new world will appear.

As the Ancient Church was a fellowship of believers who were on the move because of persecution and often were in need, and as continental Pietism provided a missionary impulse to the Renewed Church, the Unitas Fratrum today sees itself as a community in mission. The forms of the mission may cover the spectrum from educational programs to preaching for conversion, from assisting poverty-stricken persons to achieve dignity through gaining skills and land to joining with other Christians in the struggle for justice, the Unity is a world-wide mission-service member of the Body of Christ. Perhaps because it never achieved the status of an "established" or national church, Moravians have an awareness of the needs and conditions of the marginalized, the voiceless and the refugees. Mission and service are manifestations of the Moravian response to Christ's call; mission and service are both special assignments and gifts which the members of the Unity feel are given them through the Spirit.

Lutherans are not strangers to the image of Jesus the Shepherd who leads his flock. Luther and the theologians who signed the Smalcald Articles held that the Church is "holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their shepherd" and so, as do children, pray, "I believe in one holy Christian church." As expected, Lutherans hold that the Church's holiness does not consist in human ceremonies or deeds, but "in the Word of God and true faith."<sup>43</sup> Lutherans provide three dimensions relevant here to complement our common understanding of the Church.

First, the Church has outward marks or signs. God comes to us concretely in the midst of our earthly lives. From the sixteenth to the present century, Lutherans have realized that freedom and order, external and internal elements are required to hold the community together:

The church is not merely an association of outward ties and rites like other civic governments, however, but it is mainly an association of faith and of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts. To make it recognizable, this association has outward marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments in harmony with the Gospel of Christ. This church alone is called the body of Christ, which Christ renews, consecrates, and governs by his Spirit....the "communion of saints" seems to have been added [to the Apostles' Creed] to explain what church means, namely the assembly of saints who share the association of the same Gospel or teaching and of the same Holy Spirit, who renews, consecrates and governs their hearts...We are not dreaming about some Platonic republic, as has been slanderously alleged, but we teach that this church actually exists, made up of true believers and righteous men scattered throughout the world. And we add its marks, the pure teaching of the Gospel and the sacraments....Of course, there are also many weak people in it who build on this foundation perishing structures of stubble, that is, unprofitable opinions....In accordance with the Scriptures, therefore, we maintain that the church in the proper sense, is the assembly of saints who truly believe the Gospel of Christ and who have the Holy Spirit.<sup>44</sup>

On the one hand, Lutherans hold that the Spirit uses external means and forms, so that the Spirit's work can be distinguished from human passions and fads, enthusiasms and distortion. There are benchmarks or standards for doctrine and practice which can be used to protect the core interpretations and understandings, validate new insights, and serve as norms for theology and practice. On the other hand, the Lutheran position recognizes that mere conformity to rituals and structures is also dangerous. The Church is not utopia; its members are fallible sinners who need correcting, enlivening, inspiration by the Spirit. The Church has God's promise that it will always have the Spirit which will give the community of believers guidance, forgiveness and hope.

The second dimension relevant at this juncture is the Lutheran view of the relationships of persons within this community to one another and the wider society. In the *Large Catechism*, the Reformer taught that the sum and substance of "I believe in the holy Christian Church" is:

I believe that there is on earth a little holy flock or community of pure saints under one head, Christ. It is called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, mind and understanding. It possesses a variety of gifts, yet is united in love without sect or schism. Of this community I also am a part and member, a participant and co-partner in all the blessings it possesses. I was brought into it by the Holy Spirit and incorporated into it through the fact that I have heard and still hear God's Word.<sup>45</sup>

The work of the Spirit in the Church is aimed at proclaiming and assuring members that they are forgiven by and reconciled to God through Christ, then to enlighten them about God's will, to move them in the process of sanctification, and to preserve them in true faith. All baptized Christians are to engage in mutual prayer and concern, service and assistance for one another. The vocation or call to be a Christian is expressed through sharing the Word in worship, praise, and speaking mutual consolation and hope to one another. In other words, each Christian is a member of the priesthood of all believers. What was noted earlier about the relationship of the Spirit to the individual believer is lived out in the community of the faithful. Again, the *Large Catechism* noted that the Spirit "makes me holy...through the Christian church." The Church is the Spirit's unique community, "It is the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God. The Holy Spirit reveals and preaches that Word, and by it he illumines and kindles hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it, and persevere in it. The Spirit can be said to place the believer upon the bosom of the Church."<sup>46</sup>

The Spirit through the Church is also active in the world to bring God's Word - as Law and Gospel - to society and its power structures. As believers go into the world, they go in the power of the Spirit. The Spirit's enlightening role involves guiding and aiding Christians in their daily lives in the world, at work and through their responsibilities as citizens: "All this then is the office and work of the Holy Spirit, to begin and daily increase holiness on earth through these two means, the Christian church and the forgiveness of sins."<sup>47</sup>

The third dimension concerns the ecumenical perspective on the whole Church. The Lutheran position holds that agreement on two factors is sufficient for believers to agree upon: the pure teaching of the Gospel and the proper administration of the sacraments in accordance with the Word. This position permits maximum discussion and room for exploration, arenas for the Spirit to lead Christ's followers in discerning the unity they already have in Christ, and then moving

toward fuller forms of fellowship. At the same time, agreement in the Gospel and on the sacraments are of such critical importance to Lutherans that they will expend significant time and effort to ask themselves and their partners about the essence of the Gospel and the nature of the sacraments. Lutherans are willing to learn from others and to share their views, to recognize that forms of worship and expression may differ from one ecclesial communion to another and even within communions. Their fundamental concern runs straight to the heart of justification by faith through grace. From that point outward and inward, Lutherans engage in ecumenical relationships of different intensities and breadth. Lutherans are willing to say both "yes" to ecclesial ecumenical sharing at the deepest levels, and they are also willing to say "no" in love when they feel that such sharing is either not appropriate or not yet appropriate given current understandings.

Discussions of the Spirit in the lives of believers and in the Church lead to Moravian and Lutheran forms and views of the ministry.

### **3. Mutual Complementarities About Ministries**

Probably no issue is more vexing and problematic in intra-church and ecumenical discussions than understandings of ministry. This is, however, not the case for Moravian and Lutheran relations. Within our own ranks there may be substantial reflection and debate, yet we have common understandings and positions, even common internal discussions. Lutherans and Moravians share a lively sense of the priesthood of all believers through our own historical developments, Reformation heritages, and backgrounds derived from continental Pietism. We agree that all baptized members of the Body of Christ are called to pray for one another and the world, proclaim through word and deed that Jesus is Lord, share the strengthening hope of forgiveness and reconciliation, and live so that we may bear the fruits of the Spirit.

At the same time, Moravians and Lutherans agree that the ministry of Word and sacraments requires a recognizable and authorized form. Within the community of the baptized and for the sake of due order, we understand the Spirit to lead the Church to authorize men and women publicly to represent within the whole Church and to the world the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments through what is called traditionally the pastoral office. The office authorizes a person to preach, teach, administer the sacraments, and provide spiritual leadership among us. Normally the rite of ordination authorizes persons who have been called by the Spirit and the Church to fulfill the office of the ministry of Word and sacraments. We do not understand ordination to be God's granting a person spiritual superiority over others. The ministry of the ordained is a public office to which a person is called by the Spirit working within the heart of the believer and within the Christian community. While we recognize a variety of public offices in the Christian community which are filled by persons who are not ordained and while we may use several titles for those who are ordained, Lutherans and Moravians understand the roles of the ordained in remarkably similar ways.<sup>48</sup>

Ordained ministers have a triple accountability. Chiefly, they are accountable to God for the stewardship of the ministry which has been entrusted to them. At times they may have to address the Word as Law to the believing community and the wider society in spite of opposition and risk which may result from the faithful proclamation of the will of God. Naturally, they are also

called upon to test what they say and do by the Scriptures. In the same category, ordained ministers are to be accountable to the Shepherd, faithful to their responsibilities in caring for the flock of Christ, competent communicators of the doctrines of the Church, examples of Christian living, and advocates of God's mercy and justice in society. Above all, they are expected to be devout Christians, sinners who depend on the grace of God and who manifest their relationship to Christ through lives dedicated to his service in and through the Church. Second, they are accountable to the Church and their ecclesial body for exercise of their ministries among the people of God. In other words, they are subject to the discipline and afforded the counsel of the Church in matters of life, doctrine, and other appropriate support. Third, they are accountable to the congregation, agency or institution of the church which has called them to serve in their midst.

In terms of ordained ministry, Lutherans and Moravians emphasize the roles and responsibilities of congregational pastors. While Lutherans continue to consider the advisability of ordaining persons to an office titled "deacon," Moravians have such an office as the entry point into pastoral ministry. Moravians and Lutherans are recognizing the historic office of the bishop as a pastoral figure who provides advice and guidance for the church and the church's ordained and lay leadership. Both churches expect their ordained ministers normally to be educated in a theological seminary and to have demonstrated academic competence as well as ministerial skills in the context of spiritual commitment to the Gospel. From these common positions, each church complements the other's understanding of the Church and ministry. At this juncture some brief descriptions of the ministry in our respective churches may be helpful in showing that while there are differences of form, there are complements and common grounds which encourage us to recommend full communion between our churches.

A Lutheran understanding of the ministry of the ordained in the context of the ministry of the whole people of God may be seen in terms of some of the Constitution of the ELCA's statements about the Church, the specific Lutheran church and its leaders. In describing the Nature of the Church:

3.01 All power in the Church belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ, its head. All actions of this church are to be carried out under his rule and authority.

3.02 The Church exists both as a fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship and Christian service. Congregations find their fulfillment in the universal community of the Church, and the universal Church exists in and through congregations. This church, therefore, derives its character and powers from both the sanction and representation of its congregations and from its inherent nature as an expression of the broader fellowship of the faithful. In length, it acknowledges itself to be in the historic continuity of the communion of saints; in breadth, it expresses the fellowship of believers and congregations in our day.

The ELCA is a member of the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, and the Lutheran World Federation. The latter is a body which describes itself as "a communion of Churches," which has no jurisdictional authority over its member Churches. The ELCA's Constitution is the church's statement to itself and the whole Church that the ELCA will understand itself in the universal Church. Indeed, the Constitution makes commitments to

seek wider unity among Lutherans and the Church ecumenically understood. The constitution for synods of the ELCA contains the same provisions regarding the unity of the Church and the ELCA's commitments to such endeavors.<sup>50</sup> Seminaries of the ELCA are expected to provide candidates for ordination and other leadership positions as well as those serving in those capacities with educational opportunities to engage them in ecumenical thinking and action.

While the ELCA continues to devote study to the nature of the ordained and other ministries, it does have succinct statements in its Constitutions for the national church, synods and congregations concerning the responsibilities of ordained ministers. Among these are:

Consistent with the faith and practice of this church, every ordained minister shall preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship, provide pastoral care, and, shall speak publicly to the world in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, calling for justice and proclaiming God's love for the world. Each ordained minister with a congregational call shall, within the congregation, offer instruction, confirm, marry, visit the sick and distressed, and bury the dead...<sup>51</sup>

The office of bishop is part of the ministry in the ELCA. Considerations about the balance between pastoral and managerial aspects of a bishop's duties and responsibilities are on-going in the church. Again, portions from the *Model Constitution for Synods*:

S.8.12 As this synod's pastor, the bishop shall:

- a. Oversee and administer the work of this synod.
- b. Preach, teach, and administer the sacraments in accord with the faith of this church.
- c. Provide pastoral care and leadership for this synod, its congregations, its ordained ministers, and its associates in ministry.
- d. Advise and counsel its related institutions and organizations.
- e. be its chief ecumenical officer....

The synodical bishop, elected for a term by the synod assembly composed of congregational lay persons and ordained ministers, also ordains candidates for the ministry of Word and sacraments.

The Moravian understanding of ministry also may be seen as rooted in the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Church. During 1741 the responsibilities of the far-flung enterprises of the Moravian Church weighed heavily on Leonard Dober, its Chief Elder. In a Synodal Conference held in London in September he declined to continue to serve in this position and no other was willing nor was the use of the lot supportive of selecting another.<sup>52</sup> The question was then put to the Savior by the use of the lot as to whether he desired this office for himself. For the first time the lot provided a positive answer, and so it was recognized that Jesus was Chief Elder of the church in jurisdictional and organizational matters. This was announced to the international Moravian church on November 13, 1741, and since then this stands as the day when Moravians celebrate this insight. Given the historical context of the church-state relations in Germany and the situation among the members of the Unity, the proclamation of Christ's Chief Eldership was a daring step. Zinzendorf's hymn provides us with some insight on the senses of reconciliation and mission which flowed from November 13 and which is still part of Moravian practice:

Heart with loving heart united, met to know God's holy will,  
Let his love in us ignited more and more our spirits fill.  
He the Head, we are his members; we reflect the light he is.  
He the Master, we disciples, he is ours and we are his.

May we all so love each other and all selfish claims deny,  
so that each one for the other will not hesitate to die.  
Even so our Lord has loved us; for our lives he gave his life.  
Still he grieves and still he suffers, for our selfishness and strife.

Since, O Lord, you have demanded that our lives your love should show  
so we wait to be commanded forth into your world to go.  
Kindle in us love's compassions so that ev'ry one may see  
in our faith and hope the promise of a new humanity.<sup>53</sup>

The provinces of the Unitas Fratrum are members of the World Council of Churches and the national or geographical councils where they exist. Thus it has an ecumenical and international commitment. However, the Unitas Fratrum in itself is an international church, uniquely ecumenical because of the special relationships which it cherishes with various Christian traditions in the countries where it has provinces. In its governmental structure, the Unity Synod is its highest deliberative and legislative body. The provinces, represented usually by three voting members, which make up the Unity Synod meet usually every seven years. It does not have a presiding bishop but an executive board composed of persons drawn from the provinces. The board elects its own chair for a maximum of two consecutive two year terms. Proposals reflecting doctrine or the Unity's polity are referred to the Unity Synod. Each province may develop its own Book Of Order which is to be in harmony with the *Church Order of the Unity*. The Northern and Southern Provinces of the Moravian Church in America have their respective Provincial Elders Conferences which serve as administrative bodies for the provinces. These also make the basic approvals for candidates for ordination and provide the calls to pastors to congregations on the basis of congregations approving such calls with the agreement of the person to be called. Each province may explore what ecumenical relations it deems advisable, yet it is customary for provinces to keep the Unity Board informed and to seek advice from the Board. A province meets in assembly (synods) every 2-3 years. The synods elect persons to be bishops from among the ordained elders, and may elect as many as seems appropriate to the synod.

A Moravian congregation typically has a Board of Elders and a Board of Trustees, and the pastor presides over the former. The Board of Elders is concerned with spiritual and educational life of the congregation, while the Board of Trustees deals with the "temporal" affairs.

The Moravian Church has a three-fold ordained ministry: deacons, presbyters (elders) and bishops. There is one ordination (to the office of deacon) and subsequent consecrations to the other offices.<sup>54</sup> The Moravian Church in America began to ordain women in 1975.<sup>55</sup> The *Church Order Of The Unity, as revised at Dar es Salaam in 1995*, describes the office of the bishop as follows:

687 The Renewed Unity received the episcopacy as an inheritance from the Ancient Unitas Fratrum.

Today we regard the episcopacy in the Renewed Unity in a different way from that of the Ancient Unitas Fratrum. Formerly, a Bishop had a Church-governmental and administrative function. In our day, however, this function is not necessarily linked to the episcopal office. We hold to the understanding, common both to the Ancient and Renewed Unity, that only Christ is Head of the Church and pastoral oversight is exercised in responsibility to Him.

A Bishop of the Moravian Church is consecrated to a special priestly pastoral ministry in the name of and for the whole Unity.

The office of Bishop represents the vital unity of the Church and the continuity of the Church's ministry, although the Unity does not place emphasis on any mechanical transmission of the apostolic succession.

The office and function of a Bishop is valid throughout the Unity as a whole.

### **Duties of Bishop**

688 A Bishop as a Bishop has responsibility primarily for providing pastoral care to pastors and the Church, and assisting the Church in its faithfulness to Christ and the Gospel.

All Provincial and District Boards shall consult a Bishop or Bishops in all matters concerning the work in the Province or District which fall within his/her sphere of responsibility.

A Bishop has a special duty of intercession for the Unity, and also for the Church of Christ as a whole.

Bishops in active service should be enabled to visit congregations for the deepening of their spiritual life.

The opinion of a Bishop (Bishops) shall customarily be sought and given due consideration and weight in matters of doctrine and practice.

A Bishop represents the Church in the act of ordination.

Only bishops have the right to ordain or to consecrate to the various orders of the ministry, but only when they are commissioned to do so by a Provincial Board or Synod.

A Bishop, however, has the right to decline a commission to ordain, should he/she wish to do so.

In exceptional cases the ordination of a Deacon may be performed by a Presbyter in the name of and by commission of a Bishop.

A Bishop (Bishops) should share in the decisions regarding the training of candidates for the ministry and should maintain a special pastoral relationship with such candidates throughout their training.

The Synod of the Bishop's Province may also add administrative responsibility by electing him/her a member of the Provincial Board.

A Bishop may be assigned by his/her Province to represent the Province in ecumenical gatherings and before governmental agencies.

Clearly, there are variations of practices and polity regarding the nature of the ministry, but there are no factors which raise theological issues or which might impede progress toward achieving full communion between our churches

The Mutual Complementarities indicate diversity within the context of unity. Yet the nature of that diversity is seen as completing and enhancing what we already have. Our summary at this point is that Moravians and Lutherans agree with and complement each other's understandings of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Believer and in the Church, and we agree with and complement each other's positions on the Church's ministry.

<sup>23</sup> As noted previously, the Explanation of the Third Article is included in the Moravian liturgy for Easter morning and has the character of a statement of faith. The Explanations to the articles are widely known and cherished by Lutherans.

<sup>24</sup> See the Augsburg Confession, Articles 2, 3, 5, 18 and 20.

<sup>25</sup> The Explanation to the First Article reads:

I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with food and clothing, house and home, family and property; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. All this he does out of his pure, fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part. For all of this I am bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him. This is most certainly true.

The Explanation to the Second Article is:

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold but with his own holy and precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death, in order that I may be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as he is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

<sup>26</sup> *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* article IV, 2.

<sup>27</sup> See *Smalcald Articles I*, 1-5.

<sup>28</sup> *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* article IV, 43.

<sup>29</sup> *Ground of the Unity*, #3.

<sup>30</sup> *Moravian Book of Worship*, 700. The words and tune date from 1556.

<sup>31</sup> *Moravian Book of Worship*, 799. The hymn also is in the Lutheran Book of Worship, 341.

<sup>32</sup> *Moravian Book of Worship*, 346.

<sup>33</sup> For the quotations and paraphrases see *Formula of Concord*, Solid Declaration, Article VI, 7-9 and 21.

<sup>34</sup> *LW*, volume 35, pp 370f, Preface to Romans.

<sup>35</sup> *Large Catechism*, Part II, 38.

<sup>36</sup> Order for Baptism, *Lutheran Book Of Worship*, pg. 121. The italics indicate optional wordings.

<sup>37</sup> Affirmation of Baptism, *Lutheran Book Of Worship*, pg. 201. The title "Affirmation of Baptism" is given to the rite traditionally called "Confirmation."

<sup>38</sup> The Rite of Confirmation, *Moravian Book Of Worship*, pg. 173.

<sup>39</sup> This is particularly the case with Zinzendorf's expression that the Spirit is the Mother of the Church and believers. He did not intend this to ascribe gender to the Spirit, but depicted in this way the Spirit's care for the family of God and its members. Moravians today are largely unaware of Zinzendorf's thinking on the matter. It may be a way for Lutherans and Moravians to engage in discussions about the relationship of the Spirit to the Church, believer and Christ.

<sup>40</sup> *Ground Of The Unity*, Paragraph 1.

<sup>41</sup> *Moravian Book Of Worship*, 516.42 *Moravian Book Of Worship*, 396.

<sup>43</sup> *Smalcald Articles*, XII, 2-3.

<sup>44</sup> *Apology*, Articles VII-VIII, 5, 8, 20, and 28.

<sup>45</sup> *Large Catechism*, Part II, 51.

<sup>46</sup> *Large Catechism*, II, 41, 37.

<sup>47</sup> *Large Catechism*, II, 59. We note that one of the areas which we have discussed but not included references about in this report is social-political attitudes. These were not seen as issues of disagreement or complementarities, but of general affirmation. Again, further explorations will be fruitful for our respective churches.

<sup>48</sup> In the ELCA there are official yet unordained offices such as deaconess, deacons and associates in ministry. There are a variety of functions which persons may fulfill, e.g., nurses, directors of religious education, musicians, parish workers, etc. There are requirements in these instances which involve theological study, requisite skills for the position, and certification by an appropriate body in the church. Included are requirements concerning continuing education. In order for a person to remain on the official roster of the church, the person is to have served under appointment or be designated as on leave from appointment for a designated period of time.

<sup>49</sup> See the ELCA Constitution, 4.02 f ; 4.03 d,, and f. Please note Ecumenism: Vision of the ELCA is the official policy statement of the ELCA (1991 Assembly).

<sup>50</sup> See the *Model Constitution for Synods*, chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>51</sup> *Model Constitution for Synods*, excerpted from 14.02.

<sup>52</sup> The use of the lot and similar methods were popular within Pietism to discern a right decision when sufficient information was not available otherwise to make a decision. Moravians used Scripture verses, one indicating a positive answer, another indicating a negative answer, and a third slip was blank. The slip drawn was used to indicate the Savior's guidance.

<sup>53</sup> *Moravian Book Of Worship*, 401.

<sup>54</sup> Usually a Moravian deacon is consecrated as an elder after serving several years in a congregation. The process involves recommendation of the consecration and the commissioning of a bishop to do the consecration by the executive board of the Province, the Provincial Elders' Conference. There are no functional differences between a Moravian deacon and elder; both are may preach, administer both sacraments, officiate at weddings, etc. Those deacons consecrated as Presbyters must be considered spiritually prepared for the office. Deacons who do not elect to proceed to consecration as Presbyters are not considered less mature spiritually than those who do take that step. Bishops are elected from the ranks of Presbyters.

<sup>55</sup> The ELCA was formed in 1987. It continued the practice of its earliest predecessor bodies, the American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America. Those churches began to ordain women in 1970.

## **V. The Journey Continues**

The members of the Lutheran-Moravian Bilateral Dialogue recommend to their respective churches that our churches move forward as expeditiously as possible to approve our churches

entering full communion with each other, as indicated in the recommendations at the beginning of this report. We thank our churches for the opportunity to engage in this endeavor, and we thank God for helping us to grow in faith as we undertook this journey with our Savior.

We conclude by continuing the journey with our Shepherd:

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep who do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

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The Rev. Arthur Freeman, Ph.D., co-chair  
*Bethlehem, Pennsylvania*

The Rev. Otto Dreydoppel, Jr.  
*Bethlehem, Pennsylvania*

The Rev. D. Wayne Burkette, Ph.D.\*  
*Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

The Rev. C. Daniel Crews, Ph.D.  
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Robert Helm, Ph.D.\*\*  
*Winston-Salem, North Carolina*

\* member for the first three sessions

\*\* member for the final two sessions